

THE QUEEN OF APPALACHIA

BY
JOE R. BORDERS

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THE QUEEN
... OF ...
APPALACHIA

BY
JOE H. BORDERS

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Abbey Press
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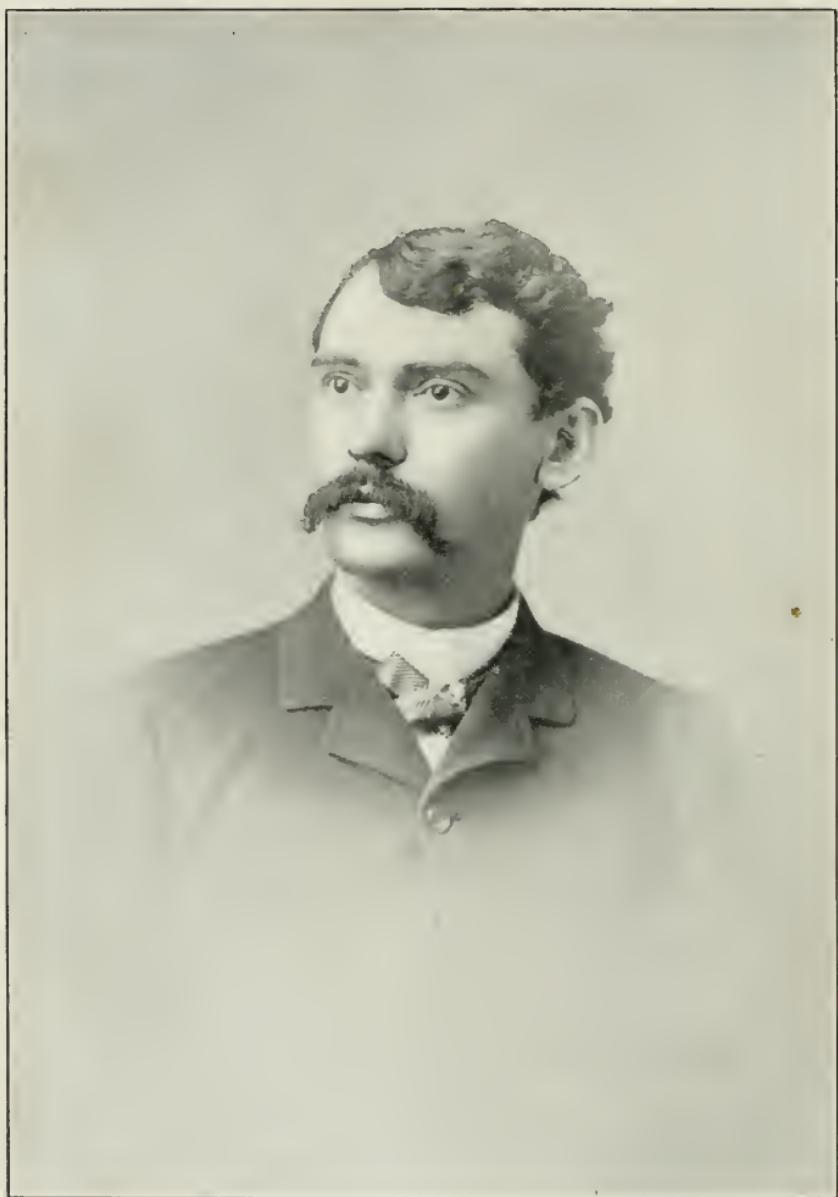
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JOE H. BORDERS.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mr. Joe H. Borders, author of this work, has been a successful journalist and a writer of short stories for nearly thirty years. In fact, if the expression may be used, he was born with a pen in his hand, his literary career beginning in his twelfth year when many of his sketches were accepted and published in various periodicals. Since that time he has been a constant writer of short stories, his fund of highly original ideas being apparently inexhaustible. His style, while terse, is yet sufficiently free that it never grows tiresome. In the "Queen of Appalachia" Mr. Borders makes his first bid for popular favor as a novelist. By the unthinking, the book will doubtless be considered a well-told story of a well-thought dream, and nothing more. But to the student-reader the book opens a new field of research—a new era of thought. This, because the questions presented in it compel the reader to ask himself, "can such things be?" and, "why should they not be?" This being so, it is expected that the unthinking will class the author of it with other dreamers in the world of novels, while, by the same token, the thinking public must concede to Mr. Borders that he has opened a new vein of religious thought, presented a new political economy, and suggested an almost perfect form of civil

Biographical Note

government. Born in Kentucky, forty years ago, Mr. Borders is too matured by birth, education and inclination to be considered a romancer or idle dreamer, and while he is too modest to claim any great literary merit in the "*Queen of Appalachia*" the reader of this Twentieth Century novel will discover much of real literary worth as well as a superior and never faltering interest in the great life study it presents.

THE PUBLISHERS.

QUEEN OF APPALACHIA

CHAPTER 1

WANTED, A GENTLEMAN CORRESPONDENT

“THIS is my farewell letter to you, Paul. Our intimacy must cease now and forever. I regret, Oh, so much, to give you up, but I dare not say more. I am to be married the coming week. Forget the past and forgive your Jersey friend. One parting kiss and your unknown correspondent will bid you a final adieu.”

Paul Thornton was twenty-one, a bright, handsome young man and the only son of a well-to-do merchant. In the little mountain town in which he was born and where he grew to his present interesting age he was a social leader. He was fairly educated and was an intelligent, ambitious youth, far above the average.

The Thorntons were known far and wide for their sobriety and thriftiness, and the family of which Paul was a conspicuous member was well and favorably known. David Thornton had engaged in mercantile pursuits early in life, and by careful business methods had succeeded in amassing considerable wealth and

was regarded as the leading business man of that section of the country.

The elder Thornton was proud of his boy, and lost no opportunity to encourage Paul's ambition to become a giant in the business world of that mountainous district. Thus it was that Paul speedily assumed the active management of the large store, including the post-office.

Princeton was one of those quaint old mountain towns which has the air and tone of the finished product. Just when it was built, is not a matter of record, and the occasional addition of a new building was a matter of great importance among its inhabitants. No railway locomotives with their shrieking whistles and sooty columns of black smoke disturbed Princeton. No telegraphic instruments ticked to her people exciting news from the outside world. There were no strikes, no tramps, no new political apostles, no telephones—not even a local newspaper. The educational mill was a modest little building containing one room, where 200 or more pupils were crowded together for instruction from one teacher. The electric light plant consisted of kerosene oil and tallow candles, and the fire department an unorganized bucket brigade.

There were two important events in which Princetonites took an active interest each week, viz: the arrival of the mail-carrier, who was the Captain of a star route, from a little town some forty miles away, and the occasional landing of a small steamer at the wharf, the river being navigable for steamboats during

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certain seasons of the year. Aside from these two principal diversions, there was the usual "protracted" meeting, and the singing school, both of which were conceded genuine luxuries. The great men of the age from a Princeton standpoint were the school teacher, the singing master and the circuit rider, and they were respected as such.

In matters social, the Princeton receptions were big dinner parties; the hostess and her daughters spending most of the day in a hot kitchen, the room permeated with the aroma of chicken and dumplings, and pies and cakes. There was but one set, which included rich and poor, old and young. Whether it was a husking bee, a quilting party or a social gathering it was a "free-for-all," without any social distinctions whatever.

Young Thornton was a lion in Princeton society. He it was who, as buyer for his father's mercantile establishment, visited the city four times a year, and set the fashion for the young people of the town. In their ignorance of the general attractions and amusements of the more progressive towns they were content and happy, and Paul continued to exercise his important position at the head of the procession of the great and only Princeton.

His life so far was an uneventful one. Grief and worry and care were practically unknown to this young man whose future was painted in one grand scene of triumph and brilliancy. It was no wonder, therefore, that he was a more than welcome visitor at every home in the vicinity, and more than one mother of

marriageable daughters had a pleased and patronizing smile for Paul Thornton.

The country post-office is a great educator. In those days the names-and-address-for-sale genius was not in business, and publishers of magazines and other periodicals were compelled to send sample copies of their publications to the Postmaster for distribution and introduction. In this way Paul had access to every kind of literature. He read everything that reached the post-office; and by this means became well informed upon all the current topics, and was the only *fin de siècle* inhabitant of sleepy old Princeton.

Some seven years prior to the period of which we are now writing, young Thornton, at the age of fourteen, got hold of a sample copy of a matrimonial paper. It was an innovation to his young mind, and the allurements held out by young ladies who "wanted to correspond with some handsome young man," were deliciously inviting. He read every line in that matrimonial sheet. In the column devoted to the advertisements of young ladies, he was attracted by the following: "Young, lively and full of fun. Object, a good time."

He couldn't resist the temptation to give it a whirl. This was something radically new and he was rapidly acquiring a taste for new-fangled things, innovations, something different from the time-worn, monotonous customs of primitive Princeton and her fossilized population.

Little did Paul think of the outcome of this step. He waited anxiously for a reply, not dreaming that this unknown correspondent was destined to play an im-

portant part in his future. While he became impatient awaiting an answer, he never lost hope and refused to entertain the idea that she would not deign to write. He had not once taken into consideration the number of replies she would receive from that little advertisement. He reasoned that not a girl of his acquaintance but would jump at the chance to reply to a letter from Paul Thornton, and of course "May Temple" would answer.

Day after day he hastily scanned the fresh arrival of letter packages, hoping to find one bearing a New Jersey postmark. Ten days went by; long, wearisome days to Paul, before the expected missive put in an appearance. He was busy sorting an unusually large mail when a bulky, square envelope came in view, bearing his name and address in a bold but elegant penmanship. He gave it one long, pleased look and thrust it into an inside pocket.

He was not surprised as he fully expected it, but its sudden receipt greatly affected his nerves, and with trembling hands and blushing cheeks he completed his task with unusual activity. When the rush of the patrons was partly over, he sat down and drew forth that first epistle from his unknown correspondent. He looked it over carefully and apparently satisfied with the outside, broke the seal. He read as follows:

"MY DEAR PAUL:"

"Gee whizz! She goes at it like one who had always known me," exclaimed the excited young man half

aloud. "Jennie Trimble and Addie Vaughan always say 'Dear Sir.' "

"Do you know, my dear boy," continued the letter, "that of eighty letters received to date, I have answered but three, and the first one to be sealed with a kiss and consigned to the destiny of the mail box will be addressed to Mr. Paul Thornton."

"Eighty," mused Paul, his eyes dreamily wandering from the enchanted page to some one at the delivery window who was asking for his mail the third time. "I don't like that—but let me finish—"

"There is a charm about your letter that is peculiarly fascinating and I am drawn to you with such force that resistance is impossible," he read, his eyes dancing and his face covered with blushes.

"That is more like it," he thought, again scanning the letter.

"Oh, but it was jolly, reading all those letters, and just think! Each one sends me a kiss and not a few his photograph. By the way, you must join my picture gallery."

"I'll do it," broke in Paul, "I would give a dollar to see her; I'm in love with her already. I wonder if she is going to write to all those fellows. I'll find out. I know she is a beauty—"

"Any mail for us, Paul?" cried a young lady at the window, breaking into his enthusiasm.

"Why, yes, I will look, Jennie," answered Paul, thoroughly unhinged for a moment, and handing the belle of Princeton a letter and a couple of papers.

"Thank you," said Jennie, accepting the mail.

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" Shall we see you at the party to-night? " she asked with her usual modest but telling smile.

He assured her of his intention to be present, and after a few more words the young lady withdrew.

" She isn't a patchen' by the side of May Temple," thought Paul as he glanced towards the retreating figure, and taking up the letter that was the cause of the unusual thought.

May Temple was a charming writer. Her word pictures were captivating and Paul may be pardoned for comparing her with his girl acquaintances, to the credit of the unknown from the East.

Thus began a correspondence that was destined to continue for an age. Letters continued uninterruptedly for seven years, when Paul was the recipient of the few lines which the reader noticed at the head of this chapter.

CHAPTER II

A PERSONAL MEETING EVADED

WHEN Paul Thornton finished the laconic epistle that severed his intimacy with a young lady to whom he was indebted for having broadened his mind and lifted the veil that screened his eyes from the world which he had resolved to penetrate, his hands trembled and he felt faint and weak. Without warning, May Temple had given him a painful shock, and one not easily endured. Instead of the usual twenty pages of charming prattle that had been a part of his life for seven years, a bolt of lightning descended from a cloudless sky, shattering hopes and bringing despair. Partially recovering from the shock, he picked up the letter that fell from his hands, and once more perused it.

"It was so sudden," he murmured. "I was not prepared for it. She never cared as much for me as her letters indicated. I was a fool to permit an unknown woman to creep into my heart. Can it be possible that she is serious? It may be a joke after all."

All day long he was silently suffering from the effects of that letter, until he finally became reconciled to the situation.

In all the seven years of their voluminous corres-

pondence, no allusion to matrimony or to their future had ever been made, except in a jocular vein.

May lived with her parents who were well-to-do people in a small New Jersey town, and, like Paul, she was the pet and idol of her home. Paul had sent her a picture of himself, a very poor creation of the photographer's art, but for some reason May had never sent her photograph to him. Notwithstanding the fact that they were merely unknown correspondents, with no apparent intention of forming a closer intimacy, the sudden termination of their relations weighed heavily on Paul's mind and he regretted the unceremonious ending thereof. May was indeed a brilliant writer, and her letters bubbled over with racy imaginations, picturesque descriptions and delicious verses, both charming and amusing. There was nothing of the love-sick order; no silly twaddle of honeyed nonsense, nor absurd gibberish of golden dreams. Their bulky letters teemed with pages of purely original sayings that breathed happiness and pleasure. And so there had grown up an attachment for each other so firmly cemented that it apparently could not easily be broken.

Paul had grown up with the idea that the fairy tales of his youth were not a myth and that he had only to express his desires and they would be a reality. But his faith in his old theories had received its death blow, through the agency of an unknown woman, and he was smarting under his first checkmate.

He missed her charming epistles at first, but when a few weeks later he left for college to take the finishing touches in education, his unknown Jersey girl was

forgotten. New scenes, new faces and hard study occupied his mind and time to the exclusion of everything else. When he returned home after an absence of ten months there was nothing left of the chain that had formerly linked their lives together.

He had been home but a few weeks, when he was surprised one evening by the arrival of a letter bearing the well known Eastern postmark. Without the loss of a moment's time the seal was broken and he was hunting for the signature.

"May Temple! Then she is not married!" said the now enthusiastic young man, and before he had gone through the six pages, all the pent up feelings of the old days burst forth anew, and he was strangely happy.

No doubt May had tired of her new toys and had longed for the old one. She told him that her intended husband was taken suddenly ill on the day before that on which the wedding ceremony was to have been performed, and after a lingering illness of several weeks he was relieved of his suffering by the Angel of Death. She had gone into mourning and the moment she had discarded black for brighter colors, she had written to her unknown Southern friend.

The letter was cleverly written, as usual, and it accomplished its purpose, for Paul fully believed her, and once more became her willing slave.

They were now past twenty-two years of age and their letters were quite different from those written in their teens. They grew more interesting as they progressed, and the more intimate they became the less prudent they were, until, heedless of the consequences,

they were compromising themselves to a limited extent. But hundreds of miles separated them, and, even now, no thought of meeting ever crossed their minds.

Through this correspondence, Princeton was made acquainted with all the latest slang, and our young hero emerged from the modest, blushing youth to a gay young man of the world; sober and industrious still, but with a thirst for the enchanting gaiety and society of a world unlike that in which he lived.

While dreaming of future plans and future scenes, dull Princeton became intolerable and Paul became restless. He was unhappy and was longing to get away from the little town and its backwood's ideas and customs.

"Why not go to New Jersey for a week?" he asked himself. "The very thing! Strange that I had not thought of it before," and having once entertained the idea he gave it serious consideration, until his mind was fully made up. He wrote May that he was contemplating a trip East and could easily drop in to see her for a day or two *en route*, as his itinerary included the well known New Jersey town.

"Won't she be surprised and delighted?" thought Paul as he sealed and addressed the hastily written letter.

Once more he was destined to receive a crushing blow. May did not say no to his proposed visit, but her reply was a disappointment. Instead of expressing delight and happiness, as he expected, he was informed that his unknown sweetheart was just packing her trunks for an extended visit with friends in New York

and other Eastern cities. She expressed regret, diplomatically saying that had she known of his intended visit a few days earlier she would have postponed her visit, but that now it was impossible for her to do so.

"I would prefer to meet you at my own home," she went on, "or I would arrange a meeting elsewhere. A letter will reach me next week if sent in care of the enclosed address."

Young Thornton expected a far different reply, and had completed his arrangements to spend a month in the East. As a matter of fact he and his father had often conversed on the subject of entering the New York market, so the basis of the young man's proposed trip was that of penetrating the Eastern commercial world. It was given out at once, for advertising purposes, that Paul Thornton would spend the month in New York buying goods for the store. So it was out of the question to change the plans, however much Paul desired to do so. The unexpected reply to his letter had given his enthusiasm a check, but the trip could not now be postponed and four days later he was a guest at the Astor House, New York.

CHAPTER III

PAUL AND THE CONFIDENCE GANG

IT was Paul's first visit to the great metropolis, and he was a veritable stranger. He was "some pumpkins" in Princeton, but in New York a very "small potato," to use his own homely simile. Although a total stranger, he brought with him letters of introduction to several well known mercantile houses and a letter of credit to the National Park Bank.

The first evening, after an early dinner, he emerged from his hotel for a stroll and to "take in" the town. Not knowing the principal streets, he just swept into the current and swam with the tide. Being from a small country town his costume was anything but "up to date," and he was easily distinguished from the city chap, and as readily "spotted" by the "bunco steerer."

He was making his way down a crowded thoroughfare, a brilliantly lighted street which he afterwards learned was the Bowery, when he was accosted by a clerical looking gentleman who made himself so pleasant and agreeable that Paul was only too glad of a chance to make some enquiries, to all of which he received courteous replies.

His idea of Eastern manners was not complimentary to say the least. He was told that the New Yorker was a stiff-necked aristocrat who would rather snub you

than treat you civilly, hence he was surprised to find in his first chance acquaintance a gentleman in every sense of the word. Here he found a man who was, undoubtedly, from his appearance and bearing, a rich man, probably a merchant or a banker, one who not only treated him kindly, but seemed anxious to extend favors.

“Like myself, you are looking at the town by gas-light,” said the stranger.

Paul had paused for a moment on the edge of the sidewalk, where he had been pushed by the surging crowd, intently watching the coming and going of the elevated trains overhead. He was not a little surprised that such a polished-looking gentleman should address him.

“I was watching those cars—yes, having nothing else to do,” answered Paul, “I started out to see the sights.”

“Where are you stopping?”

Paul did not stop to think that such a question from a stranger was out of the ordinary, and he replied instantly.

“At the Astor House?” repeated the stranger. “That’s where I hang out. When did you arrive?—To-day! I see. Well, New York is a great city. Nothing like it in this or any other country. There are a few other good-sized towns, but there is but one New York. I presume you are here often?” enquired the stranger in his suave manner that caught Paul.

“Oh, no! This is my first trip,” quickly answered Paul. “You see,” he continued, “we have been buying

our supplies in Cincinnati and other near-by towns, but we concluded to try New York."

"Sensible idea," said the clerical looking gentleman. "New York is the great centre of commerce," fumbling in his pocket. "I thought I had a card—my name is Cooper, and I hail from Philadelphia. What town are you from?—Princeton—Thornton—Ah, ha! I see! Thornton & Son; general store, I presume?"

"Yes, sir; we handle everything, have to carry a general line in our country."

"Very glad to know you, Mr. Thornton, and hope to see more of you. By the way," looking at his watch, "I have an engagement at nine o'clock. I will see you later. Good evening."

"Good-bye, Mr. Cooper. I will extend my promenade a few blocks further and return to the hotel."

"That is a nice fellow; glad I met him, he may be of use to me," mused Paul as he continued his walk down the Bowery. Arriving at the next corner he was startled by someone slapping him familiarly on the back.

"Hello, Thornton! When did you get here?" said a smooth-faced young man, shaking Paul's hand and smiling pleasantly, as though he was delighted to meet him.

"I—I know I have met you somewhere, but honestly," spoke up Paul, trying to figure him out, "I can't for the life of me recall your name."

"Norton, Norton, book-keeper for Shiletto & Co.—I've seen you hundreds of times in Cincinnati. When did you come, and where are you going now?" he

spoke off-hand but rapidly. "Let's go in and have a stein," carrying Paul off to a saloon on the opposite corner.

Paul went along, thoroughly satisfied that his companion was Shiletto's head book-keeper, but took a cigar, instead of beer,—he didn't indulge.

"I was just making for a theatre, Thornton. Won't you go along?"

"I don't care if I do," Paul replied. I want to see everything worth looking at—"

"That's my ticket," interrupted Norton; "life is too short to miss the enjoyments that are within reach—I say! Thornton, suppose we go to a variety theatre. There's one over in the next block—lot's of dancing, and scores of pretty girls, so I have been told. I have never visited one of these places, but a variety performance is on my program this trip and I am going to take it in. It's too late for the opera, anyway. Ah! there it is—right across the street."

Looking up Paul saw a theatrical-looking building, the entrance brilliantly lighted, and a band playing on the balcony overhead. They crossed over, and his newly-found acquaintance took his turn with the waiting crowd for the box office.

"A box?" repeated the ticket vender, "which floor—balcony? Two dollars, please. Here, Jim, Jim! show these gentlemen to box F, balcony. See they are made comfortable. I say, Jim, remember they are not hayseeds," following his remark with a wink which Paul did not fail to observe.

When they were "comfortably" located, Paul asked Norton if he understood hayseedology.

"I am fixed for any emergency," he replied his hand on his hip pocket.

"But we are not looking for trouble, Norton, so let us be careful," Paul said in a whisper.

They were hardly seated when a couple of painted damsels came trooping in. Their costumes, as Paul afterward described them, would not have been sufficient to flag a hand car.

The young lady who undertook to entertain Paul was rather modest in her demeanor, but as he was ignorant of the arts of the wine-room fraternity, Paul did not know that her demureness was but the acting of a part.

The gay deceiver coquettishly dropped appreciative remarks concerning Paul's gold trinkets, his watch chain, charm, studs, etc., and having examined all his personal adornments, she glanced at the four-in-hand around his collar, admiring it with much gusto. She had made one just like it for her brother out West—sent it to him for a Christmas present.

Apparently they were becoming excellent friends. Her lovely arm was carelessly resting on Paul's shoulder, and the young lady no doubt reasoned that she could cash the opportunity for a goodly sum.

Paul's blushes, which his girl companion took for rapture in his bashfulness, were for shame for the girl at his side. He could not understand how any lady could be induced to appear before a gentleman in such

a costume. Another thing, her familiarity was amazing to innocent Paul. He smiled, not because her presence was pleasing to him, but at her audacity and the freedom which she displayed in entertaining him. He was pondering over these facts when he happened to glance at Norton, and his blushes became deeper.

On Norton's knee, with her arms wound around his neck, was a hard-looking character, the opposite in appearance of the woman by Paul's side, and he seemed enchanted. Paul was shocked and for the first time realized the character of the place. His first thought was a hasty retreat, but upon further reflection he concluded not to mar the pleasure which his friend was apparently enjoying. While his thoughts were moulding into this decision, Norton's girl touched an electric button which summoned a member of the white-aproned fraternity, who almost immediately looked in upon them.

"Champagne and four," she yelled at him. He departed and the couple resumed their tête-à-tête.

Five minutes later the attendant brought in an uncorked bottle and four wine glasses.

"How much?" enquired Norton of the waiter.

"Ten dollars."

"Ten dollars!" screamed Norton. "What do you take me for?"

"Here is the printed list of prices," coolly replied the waiter, pointing to a placard on the wall.

"I guess you are in for it, old man," said Paul, who was examining the price list.

"Pay the man." pleaded the young lady, addressing

Norton; "that is the usual price; everybody pays the same. Give him the money and let us fill the glasses again and have a good time."

"No, I will never pay such an outrageous price! It is nothing but a hold-up!" said Norton, slapping his fist against the wall to emphasize his refusal.

"Will you pay, or shall I call a policeman?" roughly asked the waiter.

"I will pay it, Norton," spoke up Paul, going after his wallet and producing a roll of bills.

"You will do nothing of the kind, Thornton. Let him bring on the police. They can't play any bunco games on me."

The waiter left the box and Norton subsided. Paul, however, was ill at ease, and advised his friend to pay the bill, but his advice was refused.

"I am going to hunt him up and settle the difficulty," at last thought Paul, and he started out. Norton called after him and finally overtook him in the hallway.

"There they are," said the waiter arriving on the scene with a blue coat, pointing towards Paul and Norton.

"Come along with me, gentlemen," said the policeman. "No arguments, but follow me."

"Here, waiter," cried Paul, "I'll foot the bill."

"Too late, young man," he replied. "You can settle with the chief."

"My friend," said Norton, addressing the policeman, "this young man is not guilty of any charge in connection with this affair. He pleaded with me at the

start to avoid a difficulty, and even then offered to pay my bill. I am willing to go to the station and propose to fight this thing out to a finish, but my friend here being innocent, I don't want him dragged off to the police station on my account."

"That's right!" spoke up the waiter. "The young man oughtn't to be held. He done nothing out of the way, and acted the part of a gentleman."

"Very well, sir," said the blue-coat, addressing Paul, "stand aside. Are you ready?" turning to Norton.

"One moment and I will go with you," replied Norton. "I want to speak with my friend before leaving him alone in this hell-hole."

Taking Paul aside he told him he would probably have to give bond for his appearance to-morrow, and as he did not want to let his friends know about his little seance, he would put up a cash bond.

"I find I am short," he continued, "and if you will loan me a couple hundred I will replace it to-morrow—"

"Why, certainly," Paul interrupted, fishing out the sum desired. "When you get through with the Chief, come over to the Astor House. I'll wait you there."

"All right, old boy, I'll meet you there at eleven o'clock. So good-by."

Paul started to follow Norton down stairs, when a detaining hand pulled him back, and turning around he was face to face with his girl companion of the box.

"You are not going? It is early. Come back to our box," she pleaded.

"I hope you will excuse me," replied Paul, "really

I do not care to stay longer," and tearing himself away from her, he made his escape, only to fall into the arms of the waiter.

" Since I helped you out of a most serious difficulty, young man, the boss thinks you ought to pay for that bottle of champagne. You know it was for all of you—"

" Very well," interrupted Paul, " here is the price, now let me depart in peace."

CHAPTER IV

TO MEET AT LAST

PAUL had just entered the reading room at his hotel, when a gentleman came in and approached him.

"Are you Mr. Thornton?" he asked.

"That is my name, yes, sir," replied Paul. "What can I do for you?"

"Mr. Norton begged me to place this letter in your hands immediately," replied the gentleman, handing Paul the message.

"Thank you," he replied, taking the letter and breaking the seal. The letter was not lengthy, and when he finished, he glanced at the gentleman who still remained near the door.

"Is there an answer?" he asked Paul.

"Yes. Stay here while I go to the office," replied Paul, making his exit.

"Hang the luck," exclaimed Paul half aloud, "\$300 is a pretty big bond for so small an offense. I have but fifty with me and I doubt if I can get the other fifty," going towards the office.

The clerk explained that it was against the rules of the house to make loans to guests, and Paul was sore distressed, so much, in fact, that the night clerk took note of it. He turned his footsteps in the direction of the reading room, but presently returned to the clerk,

who was alone, and explained the situation. The night clerk heard him out and asked him a number of questions which Paul answered to his satisfaction.

"I think I can arrange the matter," finally concluded the clerk, "bring your messenger here."

While Paul went for the gentleman who brought the letter, the night clerk called a detective close at hand, and he had fully explained matters ere Paul returned.

"What is your friend's name, Mr. Thornton?" asked the night clerk as he approached.

"Norton," answered Paul.

"I will send a note down to the Chief of Police, which will be all that is necessary. Will you take it down, sir," addressing the courier, and being answered in the affirmative, he hastily wrote a brief note, sealed and addressed, and handed it to the stranger, who made his exit in hot haste.

But if the messenger was in a hurry and made good time out of the Astor House neighborhood, the keen-eyed detective was equally active and never let the man escape his eagle eyes, keeping at a safe distance so as to escape identity and suspicion, until they had reached a certain section of the city that compelled the detective to change his appearance, which was but the work of a moment, and done without losing sight of his man.

"Now I have you 'dead to rights,' old man," said the detective, again taking up the shadow and following in its wake.

Along about two o'clock that night there was a ring at the Astor House telephone.

"Is that you, Creighton?"

"Yes."

"This is Slinn, the detective. Tell your guest that I have his two hundred, and to appear in court to-morrow at nine o'clock, and help us send his friend and pals up for a few years where they will be out of the reach of country cousins. Good night."

When Paul was informed of the fate of his Cincinnati friend he was dumbfounded. He refused to prosecute the bunco steerer, who thus escaped a long term in prison, while Paul avoided publicity. It was a lesson that he will not soon forget.

When the detective met him next day and returned the two hundred dollars he was liberally rewarded. He insisted that Paul appear and prosecute, but no amount of coaxing could induce him to air the case in court.

"The clerical stranger," explained the detective, "was the advance agent of the smooth-faced 'duck,' both representatives of the second rate variety hall. You gave yourself away to 'Cooper,' who in turn gave it to 'Norton,' and between them, steered you into the wine room. They played you for a 'sucker,' Thornton, and you will do well to make new acquaintances slowly."

"Well, they found the 'sucker,' all right!" laughed Paul. "I plead guilty to being a green country 'yaup.' But the experience is worth every cent it cost. I am not 'kicking.' The next fellow that comes along professing to know me, I will inform him, in the language of the gentleman from Kansas City: 'I am from Missouri and you'll have to show me.'"

How well Paul kept his new resolution will be learned by following him the next few days.

In his sober moments that evening, his mind went back to Princeton, and to the woman who was responsible for his presence here. He brought May's last letter along, and while reading it again, it occurred to him to write her. He was one of those impulsive creatures who no sooner said a thing than it was done, and a half hour later he had posted a brief note to May Temple, Brooklyn, at the address given him, in substance as follows:

“DEAR MAY:—I have a surprise for you. I will be in the city a few days, with headquarters at the Astor House. While I would dearly love to meet you, I will not insist, and will simply ask you to write me here.

“With best wishes, etc.”

The letter reached May safely and she replied promptly, assuring Paul that if a satisfactory arrangement for a meeting place could be made, she would be delighted to keep the appointment.

“Call me up by telephone, Brooklyn, 3904, and we can discuss the matter,” concluded the letter.

“My kingdom for a telephone,” murmured Paul as he pocketed the precious letter and started for a long-distance telephone station, which he happily found near at hand.

It was the custom among the runners for wholesale houses, in those days, to entertain visiting buyers, and there was usually a scramble among the boys for this special privilege. Two days on the market gave

Paul quite an extensive acquaintance among the *fraternity*. So when he emerged from the dining hall early on the third morning, a dozen welcoming hands laid hold of him, each trying to outdo the other in greeting the young merchant, accompanied with the drummer's usual whole-souled smiles that spoke as loudly as their words of reception. Paul was 'onto' the boys by this time, however, finding by observation that, although as a class they were jolly fellows, their main object in courting friendship was after all a cold-blooded business proposition, and but for the fact that he was gaining valuable points, and an introduction into the leading houses, through them, he would have avoided the hungry crowd that swarmed after him from 'morn' till night.

In the entertaining circle was a young man Paul had met the first day of his arrival, an old acquaintance he knew in Cincinnati, by the name of Bob Myers, who was now in charge of the notion department of a large dry goods establishment in New York. Bob had proved his friendship for Paul before they met in New York, and the accidental meeting now was especially pleasant. While Bob recognized the value of the former acquaintance in a business way, yet he had taken a fancy to Paul, and his friendship was the "genuine article," as the latter expressed it.

Paul had told Bob of his experience with the bunco gang, and had also confided in him regarding his unknown correspondent, therefore, it was Bob that he sought on this special morning. He managed to get rid of his 'camp followers' in a short time by saying he

had an engagement at Coney Island all day. He promised each one to look him up on the morrow, and he was soon pouring into Bob's ears a delightful little story.

"You are to meet her at eight o'clock this evening?" eagerly enquired Bob.

"Promptly at eight," said Paul, smiling.

"Over in Brooklyn, I suppose?"

"No, on the New York end of the Brooklyn bridge," Paul replied.

"That is an interesting point," said Bob. "It is the favorite rendezvous, the trysting place for New York lovers. Gosh! I would give a month's salary to witness your first meeting."

"Then accept a complimentary ticket for a front seat, with my compliments," said Paul.

"You don't mean it, Thornton? I will break an engagement with my best girl to accept. I can hardly wait."

"Shall I meet you here, say at seven-thirty?"

"I will be here on time, old boy. The day will seem a week long. You say you two have been corresponding for years and never met? Sounds like a fairy tale, the romancer will have to take a seat in the gallery. Well, I must be off. Drop in to-day if you have time. So long."

CHAPTER V

AN HOUR IN A WINE ROOM

By eight o'clock the approach to the bridge on the Gotham side was literally jammed with animated humanity. Thousands were pouring in and as many flowing out, each one with an alertness that would dampen the faith of the reader in the extravagant articles describing the sweat shops and their worked-to-death employes. Every lady that came skipping down the gradual incline was given a searching glance, but not one answered to the description of the young lady that was photographed on Paul's mind, and none of the vast army of feminine arrivals paused on the threshold of the bridge.

Paul tried to give his friend Bob a description of May, but in the undertaking, he found he was sadly deficient in his knowledge of her outward appearance.

"You will never be able to find her in this crowd," finally spoke up Bob. "Why, that young lady coming this way, the one with a feather duster in her hat and a freckled face, might be she and you would never know it."

"You forget. She has my picture, and will no doubt study it before starting out. She could not pass without seeing me, knowing I am here."

"Then you are merely depending upon some strange

creature in petticoats to come up and claim you and carry you off," suggested Bob, laughing heartily. "If anything like that happens I am going to follow you."

"All right, Bob," replied Paul, eyeing an approaching female.

"Suppose she is afraid to meet you, and she sends the cook in her place?" said Bob, presently, trying to look serious.

"I do not anticipate running up against a kitchen mechanic to-night—"

"No," interrupted Bob, consulting his timepiece, "it is past nine now, and I don't think you will run up against anything—from Brooklyn."

"Don't you let me keep you, Bob. I am going to remain here till ten o'clock anyway."

"Oh, you can't get rid of me so easily, Thornton. I have dreamed of this meeting all day, and have pictured the thrilling scene with such an excited feeling that I imagine I am a part of the circus. No, so long as you stay I will remain by your side. I can't afford to miss the first act in the extravaganza."

Another half hour of fruitless but anxious waiting and their fond hopes were rapidly diminishing. Along about this time a young lady came in from the street, walking leisurely, and gazing at the two young men as though looking for some one. She was rather tall and stout, neatly dressed, but oppressively homely. She paused at the window opening and looked out on the side street.

"The cook," exclaimed Bob, nudging Paul. "I've a mind to speak to her."

Paul said nothing, and Bob and the silk-adorned creature began flirting, continuing until disturbed by the arrival of a watchman, whose legal authority gave him the privilege of an unwelcome and not altogether pleasant scrutiny. Bob gave him his card and explaining the situation as suited his mind, he said nothing and passed on, but in the meantime the woman had disappeared.

Paul finally gave up all hope of meeting his idol and suggested a retreat, when two tired mortals slowly wended their way out of *Newspaper Row*.

"She has played me false," Paul said to himself, utterly crushed with disappointment. "She refuses to meet me." And he trudged on, quite out of humor, trying to solve the reason for her perfidy and evasion.

"Two hours of precious time wasted," said Bob, breaking the silence as they passed into the Bowery. "That was a play with thousands of actors and actor-ettes, but not a single villain or a Juliet. Let's go to a real play house. I prefer a show where they charge admission and throw in a chair. I'm tired—awfully tired."

Paul made no reply to Bob's jocularity, but kept on in silence until they reached Koster & Bial's music hall. An hour at this place relieved Paul of his melancholy, and midnight found him at his hotel busily writing a letter to the young lady who had treated him with such contempt.

He slept late the following morning and when he sauntered into the hotel office at ten o'clock to get his mail not a familiar face was to be seen, and he was

free to peruse the one solitary letter that was handed him over the counter. Although he immediately recognized the writing on the envelope and was confident that he was in possession of an apology from the woman who had deceived him, he opened the envelope with great calmness.

"I was detained," she wrote, "and I hope you will pardon my seeming neglect in failing to keep my appointment. I will be at liberty this evening and if you still desire to meet me at the same time and place, inform me by telephone, and believe me, dear Paul, I am, as ever, your faithful and devoted friend—May."

"Confound the girl!" commented Paul. "Do what she will I can't get rid of the fact that she will always occupy a place in my heart. I have tried hard to give her up and only this morning I thought I had succeeded, but her letters have a fascination about them that I can't resist. I confess that I have a great desire to meet the woman to whom I have written hundreds and thousands of pages. I may never have another opportunity. She was 'detained,' and will no doubt explain her absence satisfactorily. Of course she will. I might have known she did not purposely fail to keep her engagement. She wants to see me—else she would not have written. No doubt she is keeping the facts from her friends and could not get away. 'She will be at liberty this evening.'"

"Hello!" came the feminine response from the Brooklyn end of the telephone wire.

"I would like to speak to Miss May Temple."

"Wait one minute, please."

"Hello!"

"Is that you, Miss Temple?"

"Miss Temple is talking. What is wanted—who is this?"

"I have a message for you from Mr. Thornton—"

"Why a message? He is not ill.—Nothing wrong I hope?" was the excited response.

"Prostrated!"

"Is he dangerous? Tell me quickly."

"No, not dangerous, but delirious and talks of nothing but you. If you would only come—"

"I will go at once. Where can I meet him?"

"You will find him on the New York side of the Brooklyn bridge," answered Paul with a ringing laugh that convinced his audience of his pleasure in conversing with the young lady whom he had renounced a few hours ago.

"Oh, you mean thing! My, but you gave me a shock. How could you?"

"Forgive me, May," he pleaded still laughing.

"I am so weak I can scarcely stand. Oh, but that was a fright. I won't be able to receive callers to-day."

"Then come over and spend the day with me."

"I would like to—No, I can't get away before evening—"

"Are you sure you will come this evening?"

"Sure. Will you wait for me?"

"I have been doing that for nine years; of course I will."

“ All right, you may depend upon me, ta, ta.”

“ Bye, bye.”

“ She comes, Bob ! ” whispered Paul, throwing away a freshly lighted cigar.

“ Which one, the tall young lady that comes tripping this way ? ” he asked.

“ Verily, Bob, it is she.”

“ I’ll bet you the opera tickets for a week that you are mistaken.”

Paul advanced a few steps as the object referred to approached. As she passed she looked him straight in the eye, a meaning smile haunting her pretty features. Without stopping or speaking, however, she glided by, and a moment later was making her way up the incline towards the waiting room.

“ No more doubts, or fears or difficulties, old man, your hour of triumph has arrived,” said Bob. “ I will linger in the neighborhood until the curtain rises and will then leave you to your fate. I congratulate you, Thornton, she is a daisy. Good-night.”

“ Good-by, Bob,” and Paul flew in the direction of the waiting room, to find a handsome young lady standing in the doorway with a smiling welcome in her pretty face.

“ May—”

“ Paul ! ”

They fell into each others’ arms like old time lovers. If Paul’s thoughts and feelings could have been transferred to paper you could have read happiness and enjoyment in every line and sentence.

“Where shall we go, May?” pleasantly enquired Paul, when he had released the bundle of loveliness from that first long and loving embrace.

“I have not thought of anything beyond our meeting. Let me think, it is late for the opera or an outing—we could go to the music hall.”

Paul was surprised at this suggestion, but he was powerless to reject any proposal she made, and he allowed her to lead him where she willed. The young lady took him for a man of the world and could think of no better place to spend an hour. They were given a box, and when a waiter came in she unhesitatingly ordered wine. Paul thought she gave the order very much like one accustomed to the manners and ways of the place. He kept his suspicions to himself, however, but was greatly astonished when she gave a second order. This was followed by a third and Paul was becoming disgusted with her. He frequently referred to their past and several times attempted to introduce the subject of their correspondence, but for some reason, wholly unaccountable to Paul, she would shift the conversation to matters of the present, the stage, the audience and other minor and even frivolous things.

Presently a gentleman entered their box, and although he was intoxicated, he was manly enough to recognize that Paul was disturbed and was on the point of retiring, when the young lady glanced towards the visitor, and a smile of recognition brought him back.

A friendly greeting followed and Paul was introduced to her tipsy friend. He took a seat in their box and ordered more champagne.

"Mr. Thornton will take a cigar," explained the young lady. "It seems," she continued, "he was here last night—"

"And does not care for wine this evening. I know how it is," interrupted her friend.

Paul was disgusted all along and he was out of patience. He longed to say good-by to May Temple. That she was a beauty, Paul could not deny, but even her pretty face and charming manner were sickening to him now. "Possibly this may be the New York way," thought Paul, "but it is not my style. But for the memory of those old letters I would leave here."

They finally became so boisterous that Paul excused himself for a moment and left them alone. He glanced into the adjoining box and finding it empty quietly took possession. He was able to hear the following conversation:

"From the country? I thought so. Friend of yours I suppose?"

"By proxy."

"Come again, please!"

"I will tell you," she began. "This fellow is sweet on one of our lady visitors from up the country. It seems they have corresponded for years and last night was to have been their first meeting, but she had company and failed to reach the appointed place in time. Well, this morning I overheard a conversation over the telephone, when another appointment was arranged for this evening. Unfortunately, as our guest was descending the stairway on her way to meet our good-looking friend—by the way, I wonder where he

went—" going to the door and looking out,— " her foot slipped and she tumbled down stairs, and she was picked up in a state of insensibility. When she was brought out of her swoon it was found that one of her legs was fractured and she was, apparently, suffering untold agonies. Between you and me, Howard, I don't believe she was hurt very much. Candidly, I am of the opinion the fall and pretended illness was a put up job. She didn't want to meet my young companion, but wanted a tangible excuse—"

" What gave you this impression? " broke in the stranger.

" Because she called me right away and asked me to meet him."

" With an apology? " he interrupted.

" Well, yes. I was to try and see him and explain her absence. She gave me a minute description of her lover, even to the cut of his coat, style of hat, and mentioned his curly hair."

" She surely could not have been so well informed of one she had never seen, " he put in.

" As to that I couldn't say. Any way, " she continued, " from her description I had no trouble in recognizing him, and, Howard, he is a nice looking chap, isn't he? Well, when I first caught his eye, he immediately took me for his girl, and when he came up and embraced me so sweetly and was so sure he knew me, I just couldn't tell him the truth."

" You don't mean to tell me."

" Oh, I'll tell him bye and bye."

“ You are a brick, Rose, let’s have another phiz.”

And while they were cracking another bottle, Paul Thornton was making his escape, and he reached his hotel in a very unsatisfactory state of mind.

CHAPTER VI

HER MIND A BLANK

IT was about the middle of January, some seven or eight months following the events related in the preceding chapter, that the young merchant of Princeton might have been seen in company with his old college chum and roommate, J. L. Brownlee, leisurely wending his way up a beautiful, tree-lined avenue of the famous college town of old Virginia.

Mr. Brownlee had been advised of his coming and was at the station to welcome his old friend and companion back to the scene of their pleasant college days. Although five or six years his senior Brownlee had always regarded his chum in the nature of a twin brother, and they were very much attached to one another. During their school days their intimacy was of a pronounced type, and they were inseparable companions, their customs, likes and dislikes and tastes harmonizing to a remarkable degree.

A carriage had been engaged to convey them up town, but Paul induced his friend to dismiss it. He preferred to walk. The fashionable thoroughfare which they had to traverse to reach their destination was too inviting on this ideal day for a closed cab. Paul remembered the pleasure a stroll along this familiar

route in the old days superinduced, and he longed to look again upon the scenes that gave him such delight and enjoyment.

"You are still in possession of our old rooms, Brownlee? That is splendid. By the way, let me congratulate you on your promotion. I knew you would get there. I always told you so."

"Yes, I thought of your prediction when I was first named, and I wished you were here to share the enjoyment it gave me."

"You deserve it, Brownlee. I presume you are still the same indefatigable Bible student?"

"My favorite study, Thornton, and I don't mind telling you I have made wonderful progress. I remember you used to try and get me tangled up on biblical subjects, and I am glad to have you with me again. I think I can give you a better insight into the new thought now."

"I dare say," replied Paul. "I may just as well confide in you. My object in visiting you is none other than to take a thorough course in your favorite study, under your teaching. My mind is prepared for it and I am ready for a spiritual baptism."

"Then the battle will be an easy one. in fact, it is already won. I was glad to see you, but now I am delighted."

The conversation continued along this line until they reached the boarding-house, where Paul was again given a royal welcome by the landlady, a charming woman who held Paul Thornton in the very highest esteem.

Paul had graduated with the highest honors and the old faculty gave him a handsome reception at the college chapel next day. Many of the students he knew were still there, and each vied with the other in doing him honor, for here, as well as elsewhere, he was a general favorite, and the praise and compliments heaped upon him were enough to have turned an older head than his; but Paul was equal to the occasion and escaped without even a slight attack of the "swelled head."

Six months with Brownlee had given Paul a thorough biblical education, and he returned home a new man and a confirmed believer in the new order of things. He had progressed far enough to thoroughly demonstrate the efficacy and power with which he had been baptized, yet he refrained from imparting that knowledge to his home people, knowing their orthodox views were as impregnable as adamant. When occasion required, he did not seek to "hide his light under a bushel," but gave freely of his knowledge and gifts, taking care not to cast his pearls before swine, going about doing good in his own way.

Princeton marvelled at the great change in Paul. While he gave up none of the attractive features of the social world, and was as full of life and gaiety as ever, his personality was clothed with a heaven-born raiment that was a mystery.

* * * * *

For years Paul had regularly spent a part of the summer in the mountains, hunting and fishing. He

was fond of sport, and nothing could induce him to give up his usual summer vacation. Just now he was busy planning for his annual outing. It was early in July, and he and a half dozen agreeable companions had completed their itinerary which included a visit into the picturesque Virginia Mountains. They provided themselves with guns, ammunition, fishing tackle, and other necessaries including blankets, and had given orders for the building of a light craft to carry them to the headwaters of the Chattaroi river, when an incident happened that was unprecedented. A mid-summer tide, the like of which was unknown to the oldest inhabitant.

The quiet little stream of a few days ago suddenly became a mighty river, enabling one of the largest steamers to navigate some forty miles farther up the stream than it ever had before. Paul and his party took advantage of this steamboat excursion and were far into the mountains in a short time.

For three days the jolly hunting party climbed rugged mountains and crossed deep ravines. During their journey so far not a single sign of human habitation had been seen. It was climbing one mountain to the top to behold another and mightier one beyond, and so it continued each day. The forest was so dense at times that their progress was greatly retarded, and more than once they would arrive on the precipice of a towering cliff that overhung the mighty depth below, into which one false step would have sent them to dismal, agonizing death on the rocks a half mile below.

However much has been written of the grandeur

and glorious scenery in different portions of the globe, the writer will vouch for the truth of the statement of Paul Thornton and his companions that nowhere on earth can be found such enchanting scenes as the mountains at and beyond the headwaters of the Chat-taroi river. The vast panorama of wooded hills and sky-scraping mountains, densely covered with forests and huge rocks, majestic oaks and clinging vines, huge cliffs and charming caverns, carpeted with rich moss, could not be exceeded in this or any other country. Add to this mind picture, the beautiful foliage that filled the immense space, on a lovely July morning in that charming galaxy of verdant timber, inhabited by every species of the feathered tribe, whose grand chorus echoed and reechoed from dale and mountain, in unison with the music and drama of the wild animals below. Imagine a grander, more glorious scene and heaven has lost its charm.

On the cloud-touching peak of the gigantic mountain, the supreme tower of the seemingly endless chain, sat Paul Thornton, silent and alone, drinking in the remarkable splendor of the brilliant scene. Never will the memory of this radiant, heaven-inspired picture fade. From his elevated point of view his eyes traveled miles upon miles in every direction, sweeping the grand spectacle of never-fading splendor in landscape.

The report from a rifle penetrated his ears, and hastily clutching his gun he arose and quickly started down the mountain side in the direction of the sound. On and on he went but no sign of his companions was

found. In his haste to join them many opportunities for bagging game were lost, and once a mountain lion crossed his path without injury.

A couple of hours of fruitless pursuit convinced him that he had taken the wrong direction. He was no doubt many miles from his friends, and he was at a loss what to do next. His gun had been used frequently, but no answering signal reached his ears.

He was seated on the trunk of a huge tree, undetermined which direction to take, when a blood-thirsty looking beast came tramping slowly towards him. He was a stranger to Paul. His first impression was that the unwelcome visitor was a grizzly, but closer inspection proved he was at fault. On the impulse of the moment he jumped to his feet and poured shot into the animal. This only infuriated the approaching quadruped, and with a blood-curdling roar that reverberated over the mountain sides, he increased his gait, and Paul took to his heels with remarkable swiftness, escaping down the mountain. In his flight he ran into a well beaten path which he followed.

Knowing that they were now separated, possibly for days, Paul kept to the path, hoping it would lead him to some place of habitation, nor was he disappointed, for, late that afternoon, from the top of a mountain, he saw a log hut in the valley below. Not far from the cabin was a stream, and after a careful examination of the surrounding country he made up his mind that the stream was the Chattaroi, or one of its tributaries.

Forcing his way through brambles and bushes, he finally reached the river, on the mossy banks of which

he sat down to rest and think. No doubt he was thoroughly exhausted for he was soon fast asleep.

How long he remained in dreamland he was unable to determine, being suddenly aroused by a piercing scream. He was on his feet in an instant and hastened in the direction of the cry. Quickly arriving on the edge of the river he discovered the source of the scream that had so startled him. About in the middle of the stream he noticed the head and shoulders of a woman who was struggling to keep above water. Without the loss of a moment he plunged into the river and was soon towing the drowning form to shore. He was an expert swimmer, and was perfectly at home in the water.

But a short time before he was puzzling his brain as to how he would reach the rude dwelling house on the opposite shore, and he solved that problem as he swam towards the other side, holding the lifeless form and his gun in one hand while with the other he reached dry land and safety.

Quickly carrying his burden to a grassy plat near by he gently deposited her, face downward, on the ground. Water flowed freely from her mouth. Life seemed extinct. Her hands were still warm and he rubbed them. He shook the body, rolled it over and over, and placing his ear over her heart he was given no hope. He had read of remedies to be applied for restoring drowning persons, but his memory was clouded.

“What can I do? Help! Help!” he cried at the

top of his powerful voice, but there was no response save a mocking echo.

In his despair and anguish, after all hope of bringing her back to life was rapidly diminishing, he paused and his frame shook until he could almost feel the ground tremble under his feet. Away up there in the wilderness, with no help, with the almost absolute certainty that at his feet was a human being beyond aid, Paul smiled. His agony and excitement had given way to calmness and perfect peace. The anxiety that so visibly affected his countenance and actions hitherto had entirely disappeared, and a pleased expression haunted his vision.

Paul opened his eyes and they were concentrated upon the individual before him but an instant, when her body trembled from head to foot, as if electrified, her hands moved in unison with the body, the phantom-like face suddenly became diffused with life blushes, the blue eyes opened. She stretched forth her hand and with Paul's assistance stood on her feet. Her lips parted, showing two rows of pearly white teeth, and an exquisite mouth. The smile that lit up her countenance was singularly beautiful, and her entire face and bearing eminently patrician.

"Be not afraid, sweetheart," said he gently. "You are safe with me."

"Where am I? Surely this is not heaven?" she asked in a soft voice, still smiling. "Oh, I had such a beautiful dream," she continued. "I was plunging over precipices into immense space, and I drifted

into one vast dismal cave, and was hurled through angry waters, to certain death, it seemed, when I arrived at a beautiful landing, the base of a grand stairway, where angels were ready to receive and welcome me. I could not resist their invitation and we started up the steps, and when assured that we were near the top, I awoke to find an—an—you, smiling at me."

"A glorious dream, but no doubt it ended in disappointment," began Paul, "but let me suggest that we find a place of shelter where you can dry your dripping garments, and perhaps exchange them for others."

"Thank you—you are very kind," she replied simply, noticing for the first time the condition of her costume. "I am sure I do not understand how I came to be in this plight; my mind seems a blank."

"Then think no more about it," replied Paul, "it will recur to you later on," taking her arm.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE TOILS OF "BAD ANCE"

THE cabin for which Paul was headed with his fair charge was some two hundred yards distant and was easily reached. Not a word was spoken by either of them, so intently were their thoughts, each trying to solve a very deep and apparently unaccountable mystery.

Arriving at the small log house, Paul knocked on the closed door two or three times, and finally pushed it ajar, to find the room empty, excepting a few articles of furniture, most of which were crude, home-made affairs. The floor consisted of rough, loose boards, an old-fashioned bedstead stood in one corner, a table and two stools occupied the middle of the room, and a miscellaneous lot of cooking utensils were scattered on the hearth-stone in front of the big, open fire-place. A huge back log was smouldering and only needed an armful of dry wood to produce a good, warm fire.

When the young lady was comfortably seated on one of the substantially built stools, Paul replenished the fire and coaxed the embers into a blaze.

"There is abundant evidence of recent habitation here," said he, "and we will make use of the comforts within reach. The owners can only order us out when

they find us here, but in the meantime we will wring our clothes and let this borrowed heat consume the surplus water," glancing at the girl.

"Then you, too, are a stranger here?" she exclaimed in astonishment.

"Yes, indeed," replied Paul. "I only reached here to-day, and this is the first house I've seen the past three days. From your appearance and costume I do not have to ask you whether you are a mountaineer, but I am anxious to know how you came to be here."

"A natural question, and one I would be glad to answer intelligently," she replied, thoughtfully, "but I must ask your indulgence for the time being," rising and unloosening the elegant long robe that encircled her body.

"Let me help you," suggested Paul, going to her assistance.

"Thank you, sir. I am fortunate in finding such an agreeable helpmate. You are a gentleman, and my good knight-errant."

After she had removed her cloak she presented a beautiful picture.

"Surely," thought Paul, entranced, "this is not a type of the new woman," his eyes rested on the wealth of jewels she wore. "No," was his comment. "She is some titled foreigner, but why is she here? It is impossible to realize the presence of such a radiant, richly adorned beauty in this wild, out of the way place. I must ferret this mystery out, my enthusiasm for hunting has lost its charm, for the present, at least."

While Paul was busy with strange and perplexing thoughts, the vision of loveliness had been industriously making herself presentable by arranging her hair that hung loosely over her perfect shoulders.

But for the golden hair and feminine face, she would easily have passed for a handsome young officer, dressed for a royal reception. Her manner was the pink of perfection, her smiles were divinely sweet and captivating and her face a dream. That she was of a proud and noble race was evident.

Never in his experience had Paul seen such loveliness nor such an elaborate costume.

"Now, my friend," seating herself near Paul, "kindly tell me the meaning of our soiled garments and how you found me," looking straight into his big, brown eyes.

"With pleasure," and he narrated the recent incidents. She was speechless with surprise, and said:

"Then to you, I am indebted for my life. How can I ever repay you for imperiling your life for a woman without name or home?"

"Don't mention it, please. I am only too happy to have been of service to you. I did nothing unusual, and took no risk in plunging into the water. I would have done the same for anyone else. I am congratulating myself that I happened to be there when help was needed. Only think what would have been your fate if help had not been near. I shudder to think of it."

"It was most providential," she replied with a sigh. "Do you reside near here?" she enquired suddenly.

"My home is quite a little distance from here," he replied. "Several hundred miles, in fact," and he gave her a description of the route from the time he left the steamer until he reached the river on that eventful day, taking care to picture the scenery *en route*.

"Delightful!" she exclaimed, clapping her soft, little hands. "When do you think of returning?"

"Howdy!"

The above gruff salutation fell upon their ears at this point in their interesting conversation, and the door-way was darkened by the appearance of a man that at once reminded Paul of Rip Van Winkle. He was a hardy mountaineer, rather coarse looking, with long, unkempt beard. An old slouched hat covered his head.

"I beg your pardon, sir, for this seemingly unwarranted intrusion. In passing here an hour ago I sought entrance. Finding no one at home, and being drenched to the skin through crossing the river, the fire looked so inviting that I did not hesitate to enter. I presume these are your premises?"

"They be," coolly replied the host, advancing cautiously. When he discovered the young lady his hat was instantly removed and with an awkward courtesy he mumbled an apology.

"You-ens are welcome, mister. When did yer reach these ere parts?"

"Just got here," replied Paul, "and," continued he, by way of apology, "we got lost from a party of friends this morning, and luckily found your house."

"Yaas you-ens *wus* lucky, mister, kase yer pardners wus run in by Bad Ance over the mountain."

"Ance Hatfield!" exclaimed Paul. "Are they in danger?"

"I reckon Ance 'll do 'em no harm, mister, bein's they're no officers, but ye ought to have heard 'em beg. They giv right in, they did, and denied bein' arter Ance, and I reckon they warn't."

"Where are they now?" asked Paul.

"Nigh onto ten miles, I reckon," was the reply.

"How long do you suppose he will keep them in custody?"

"Not fer long, mister. He'll bring 'em over here by mornin' and ship 'em down the river. Bad Ance is not a bad man," continued their host, "but he don't take to strangers, he don't, bein' as he's wanted at the court house down yonder. What might yer name be, stranger?"

"My name is Thornton, Paul Thornton, from Princeton."

"Thornton, Thornton," repeated the host.

"What a pretty name," murmured the young lady, greatly interested in the conversation.

"I used to know a Thornton, I think his name wus Dave—"

"That is my father," interrupted Paul.

"Do tell! Are you Dave's boy? Well I'm powerful glad to see you, Thornton. I ain't seed Dave for a coon's age. Me an' him used to go possum huntin'. Ah, them wur great days, Thornton, great times. And that is yer wife, I reckon, Thornton?"

"She is my sister," replied Paul.

"Then she is Dave's gal! well I'll be gol darned! Wait till I go and git a light," and he got a move on himself, returning presently with a pine torch.

"I want you ens to make yerself to hum. Ain't got no fine 'commodashions, but yer are welcome to all I'se got. Tell Dave that Bill Dempsey is comin' down to pay him a visit some of these days."

"I will give him your message, Uncle Bill," assured Paul, becoming neighborly, "and I know he will be pleased to hear from you, especially as you have been so kind and hospitable to us."

Uncle Bill was busying himself in preparing a supper, which was coarse, but most acceptable to his guests, who had eaten nothing since early morning. He made no apologies, and did everything in his power to make his visitors comfortable. When the "supper things" were cleared, he built up a good fire and the evening was spent in conversation.

"Who is this 'Bad Ance' referred to?" asked the young lady of Paul when they were left alone during the evening.

"Bad Ance," said Paul, "is known far and wide as the mountain desperado. Several years ago a family feud began between the Hatfields and McCoys,—neighboring families. It was but a trifling matter that was the foundation of the now famous feud, but the warfare grew and became desperate from year to year, many being killed, but 'Bad Ance,' as he is familiarly called, although the ringleader of the Hatfield gang,

has so far escaped death as well as sheriff and constables. It is a long story, sweetheart, and while he is considered a desperado and a bandit by the world at large, and is no doubt a savage-looking person, owing to his self imprisonment in these mountains, in hiding from officers of the law, I dare say he has a tender heart and a sympathetic nature, could one reach the real man. I do not have any fears for my friends, but I fancy they were frightened."

"Will they come this way?" she asked.

"I gather from Uncle Bill's remarks they will be marched down here, with a request to quit this country."

"Will that include you?"

"I hardly think so, owing to the friendly relations established between our host and us, but I have made up my mind to leave here to-morrow anyway, provided you desire me to escort you to civilization."

"Do not let me disarrange your plans, I pray you, Mr. Thornton. I begin to feel that I am imposing upon you and if possible, I prefer to assist you rather than interfere with your plans."

"If my program is changed to serve you, sweetheart, I want to assure you it will be a pleasure. To please you I am going to please myself."

"You are awfully kind, Mr. Thornton. I very much desire to enter into your plans, and if they include a month of climbing these splendid mountains I will freely acquiesce. I fully trust you."

"Well said, sweetheart. I will do nothing without your consent, but here comes our host."

"Uncle Bill, where can I procure a light craft that will carry us safely down the river?"

"Lemme see," he answered. "Sylvester Johnson has a canoe that would jist suit you-ens, I reckon, an' it's only a short walk down to his place."

"The very thing, sweetheart; to-morrow we will take our leave."

CHAPTER VIII

MRS. OVERTON'S CHARMING GUEST

IT was a typical July day in Princeton, and the old town never appeared to better advantage. The leaves rustled softly in the gentle breeze, keeping time with the charming carols of the fluttering birds. The flowers were radiant in their beauty and perfume, and the one main thoroughfare was a lively scene, with here and there a bevy of lively young students who had just been liberated from the confinement of the school room.

The overland mail had just wheeled into view, and was met at the post-office with the usual crush of townspeople.

On this particular occasion the stage coach was occupied by two women. One of the occupants was recognized as Mrs. Overton, a young and handsome widow, who a few weeks before had left Princeton for Long Branch for a short visit to the sea-shore; an unusual proceeding and one much commented upon by her neighbors. But the question that agitated the minds of the observing crowd of men and boys, and the dozen or more school girls on their way home, did not concern the Widow Overton. The question was who was her young companion?

Seemingly unconscious of the admiring gaze of the

multitude, the strange young woman was intently studying the signs on the windows of the establishment in front of which they had stopped.

"Thornton & Son," she read, quickly flashing her sparkling eyes over the throng before her, eagerly scanning the many up-turned faces, as though expecting to find a familiar face.

The mail sacks having been disposed of, the driver remounted the seat, cracked his whip and the old stage coach, with its interesting passengers, wheeled up the street.

"Who is she?" came from a dozen throats simultaneously.

"Isn't she a beaut'?" cried an enthusiastic admirer.

"Some Eastern girl on a visit with Mrs. Overton," suggested the school teacher, and the crowd nodded assent.

Princeton society was greatly interested over the arrival of Mrs. Overton and her guest, and when it became generally known that the handsome young woman from the East was here for an indefinite visit, she was the talk of the town.

Miss Arnold and Mrs. Overton had been stopping at the same hotel at the famous Atlantic summer resort. It happened that both were without escorts and they naturally fell in together, their intimacy growing day by day, until they became boon companions.

Early in their friendly relations Miss Arnold discovered that her chum was from Princeton; and they spent many hours together discussing the mountains. Finding her so greatly interested, Mrs. Overton was not

slow in singing the praises of her beautiful country. She referred to the charming simplicity, happiness and contentment of the people, with pardonable pride.

Miss Arnold was apparently enthusiastic and never tired of the subject, and the widow was surprised at the interest manifested by a young society girl of the East.

"How I would enjoy a summer among your native hills, Mrs. Overton. Long Branch seems dull in comparison," exclaimed the young lady one afternoon after listening to a glowing recital of her favorite subject.

"Why not? I would be delighted to have you," was the response. "I return home in a few days, and the most charming season of the year is now beginning at home. Come with me."

Miss Arnold's pulse quickened. It was the opportunity she had longed for, the invitation she had so much desired, but she tried to check the outward show of pleasure, and carefully weighed the words she uttered in reply.

"Really, Mrs. Overton, you are kind to a fault. You do not mean it. What would my friends say?"

"We could easily go by way of your New Jersey home, and there gain the consent of your parents. It would not take us out of the way to any great extent."

"True, but—but—"

"No, my dear girl, I will accept no excuse. I am going to take you home with me," cried Mrs. Overton, impulsively. "My, but you will turn the heads, and perhaps break a few hearts in Princeton," she added.

"I will think about it," said the young lady. "At

any rate," she continued, meditatively, "it will not be necessary to stop at home. I will write to know if mama and papa approve of it, before deciding. In the meantime let's enjoy Long Branch."

Following the reception at the home of Mrs. Overton, given in honor of her guest, which was the social event of the season, Miss Arnold was flooded with party invitations and by the end of the week she could count her gentleman admirers by the score, and she was lionized throughout the country.

The central figure of every social function was Miss Arnold, and she entered into the parties and games and sport with keen enjoyment. In fact, she introduced many new and novel games and amusements that were foreign to the natives. She was full of life and gaiety, and it was not long before the young people had planned a picnic party for her especial benefit. This was an outing without a parallel in point of fun and amusement as well as attendance. Everything that transpired thereafter, dated from that picnic. Here as elsewhere Princeton's honored guest entered into the merriment and festivities with heart and soul, being the one central star of admiration. It was Miss Arnold here and Miss Arnold there, and she was ever ready to respond in her happy, winsome manner.

Princeton had something to talk about now. In stores and shops and on the street corners, as well as in parlors and dining halls, Miss Arnold was the theme of conversation, and, strange to say, she suffered none from the talking populace. No one had questioned her right to the honors and attentions heaped upon her.

Mrs. Overton had merely introduced her as a particular friend, just out of college, and that was sufficient. That she was the daughter of a rich banker and lived in a brown-stone mansion, was news that neither she nor Mrs. Overton had given publicity.

"When do you expect the return of the hunting party, Mrs. Overton?" asked Miss Arnold one morning, some two weeks after their arrival in town. She had been acquainted with the facts concerning the absent party from several sources at different times.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you!" exclaimed Mrs. Overton. "I understand that Mr. Thornton came up on the stage last night. No one seemed to know how he came to return from that direction."

"Are you sure he came—Did you see him?" asked she, with such interest as to bring a smile to the face of the widow.

"No, I didn't see him. Yes, I am sure he is here, for Mrs. Brown was over early this morning and told me she met him, and in answer to her query about the other boys was told that he left them up in the mountains."

"I presume he tired of the sport and camping out. What if he was ill?"

"No, no, my dear girl, nothing of the kind. He is looking unusually well, I was told."

"I am just dying to see him, Mrs. Overton. I have heard so much of Paul Thornton that he haunts my dreams and I have been anxiously waiting his homecoming. I can hardly wait for an opportunity to get a look at him."

"I knew it! I knew it!" exclaimed Mrs. Overton, gleefully. "You are in love with him, and I am not going to blame him if he succumbs to your charms. But, my dear girl, you must prepare to lose the friendship of at least one girl if you smile too sweetly on Mr. Thornton."

"I know to whom you refer, but I am not so far gone, perhaps, as you think. But—"

"I have it," interrupting her. "I have a letter to post—here, run down to the office. You don't mind going alone?"

"Not in the least. You are a schemer, sure enough," joyfully cried the girl, putting on a natty summer hat and a scarlet tie. "How do I look?"

"Stunning!" was the reply. "You might make a few purchases, if you care to," with a knowing wink, as she tripped down the stone steps.

CHAPTER IX

A SURPRISE FOR PROFESSOR BROWNLEE.

PAUL and his queenly companion were up bright and early on the morning following the memorable drowning scene, and after a hastily despatched meal they bade Uncle Bill adieu and started in the direction given, to find the canoe. Paul thought best to evade his friends on account of his mysterious companion, and he asked Uncle Bill to say nothing to them of his whereabouts, giving as his reason that the young woman wanted to return home and if they knew his plans they would not like it, and might possibly insist upon his remaining with the party. He gave his promise and they took their leave.

They had not proceeded far, however, before they met Henry King, the only one of the party who had escaped the toils of "Bad Ance."

"Hello, Thornton!" he cried. "Which way?"

"Good morning, Hank," was Paul's salutation. "Where are the rest of the boys?"

"Don't ask me. We struck Old Nick himself yesterday, and we all took to the woods like the wind, and I haven't seen one of them since."

"Oh, then you escaped 'Bad Ance.' I heard of the capture. They'll be down this morning. You go up

the road about a half mile and you will find a log cabin. Tell Uncle Bill I sent you. Get your breakfast and keep a lookout for the boys. They are to be there pretty soon, and will be liberated. I will take this young woman on down to the house. If I don't get back do not wait for me."

"I did not mean to allow any of my party to see you, sweetheart, in order to carry out certain plans I was perfecting, and purposely avoided an explanation—"

"Pray make no apologies, Mr. Thornton," she interposed.

* * * * *

Four days later our two young friends alighted from a palace car in a familiar Virginia city, and hastily procuring a cab were rapidly driven up the avenue in the same direction taken by Paul and his college friend nearly six months previous. Arriving at the well-known boarding-house, unannounced, he led his companion through the open hall door, and entered the reception room without the formality of knocking.

Fortunately, the room was empty, and he chuckled to himself over the discovery.

"Make yourself comfortable, sweetheart, while I look up the landlady," whispered Paul, making his exit.

He found her in the dining-room, pleased, yet surprised at seeing him.

"I wasn't expecting you, Mr. Thornton. How are you? When did you come?"

"Just this minute," he answered. "Can I see you alone for a moment?"

"Why, certainly. Come this way," leading him into the library. "You are not like yourself. What is it?"

"In the adjoining room is an angel that I caught the other day while on a hunting trip in the mountains. Who or what she is I know not,—neither does she. I discovered her in the middle of a stream in a drowning condition, and when restored to consciousness her mind was a blank. She could remember nothing of her past, and even her name escaped her. She is well educated and speaks our language, and yet I am confident she is not an American—"

"Mr. Thornton! Are you putting up a joke on me? How am I to swallow such nonsense?"

"Nothing of the kind. I am speaking the truth. Did I ever tell you a falsehood? But let me finish. I was at a loss what to do with her, when I thought of you. I want to engage rooms for her until I can solve the problem of her life. I have great hope that eventually her memory will be restored."

"This is the most wonderful thing I ever heard of," said she. "I must see her."

"One thing more. Do not, under any circumstance, mention to anyone what I have told you. Do you promise?"

"I promise," she replied.

In the hall Paul encountered his old chum, who was greatly astonished at seeing him, and especially so when he noted the hunting costume.

"I'll be up in a moment," apologized Paul in a hurried greeting, passing on with the landlady.

Brownlee never moved. He was in a deep study.

"I wonder what brings him here so suddenly that he didn't have time to change his dress," he mused. "Deuced queer," he said, slowly climbing the stairs.

Paul came bounding in a few moments later and poured into Brownlee's ears a thrilling story, that would not have passed muster if poured from other lips. He knew Thornton was not capable of deception, and he was so filled with amazement over the recital that his lips refused to move and he continued to sit there, utterly speechless.

"Thornton, the story sounds rather fishy, to use a slang expression, but I am inclined to believe it, supported as it is by her presence. I must see her. I must say the narrative took my breath away. What are your plans?"

"I want your advice, old man."

"Then give me an opportunity to converse with the young woman. She may be a fraud, Thornton. You must remember we are living in a fast age."

"Impossible in this case, Brownlee—do not jump at conclusions; delay your verdict until you know more of her. I will arrange for an interview."

The good landlady went into raptures over the young woman, and after taking her to a prettily furnished room on the second floor, and personally attending to her immediate wants, she sallied forth with Paul's fifty

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dollar bill to the fashionable shopping district where she was able to make such purchases as were necessary for the mystic queen, and when that young lady appeared in the drawing room later, Paul hastened to meet and to congratulate her upon the pleasant change in her costume.

“ You are so rapidly increasing my obligations that I will have to beg of you to desist, Mr. Thornton. I am afraid I shall never be able to discharge them,” she said in her sweetest tones.

“ Remember your promise, sweetheart,” leading her to a divan.

“ Promise? ” she repeated, enquiringly.

“ To fully acquiesce in all my plans—”

“ Then under consideration, my dear Mr. Thornton, which did not include future plans and obligations that may prove burdensome to you.”

“ Let us change the subject, sweetheart. I have a few friends here I want you to meet, and in order to introduce you—”

“ I must adopt a name,” she interrupted. “ That has been my only worry from the first. It is humiliating. I am pained more than you imagine over the fact that I cannot remember my own name; it is extremely embarrassing. Suggest a name, Mr. Thornton, but I want you to retain for your own use the old name that you christened me at first. ‘ Sweetheart ’ will ever be a sacred name on my memory tablet.”

“ With pleasure,” he replied, raising her hand to his lips, a courtesy she acknowledged with stately mien.

“ Call me by any name you choose, Mr. Thornton,

in addressing your friends. By the way, you leave me to-morrow. How lonesome I will be. But you promise to return in a week ; that will give me something to look forward to with pleasure."

" You will be among loving friends, sweetheart, else I would not think of going away."

" I have no right to monopolize your time, Mr. Thornton. You have business that no doubt demands your personal attention, and I don't want you to think I am so selfish as to keep you away from your friends at home. At the same time, do not forget that I will anxiously await your return."

A knock at the door ended the tête-à-tête, and Mr. Brownlee was admitted and introduced to the fair stranger, when the conversation became general and the evening passed all too briefly.

CHAPTER X

WHY MISS ARNOLD CAME TO PRINCETON

ON her way to the post-office Miss Arnold was overtaken by one of her gentleman admirers who accompanied her down town. Both were blythe and gay and the young man's heart was overflowing. She had carefully avoided the exclusive society of the young men, always making some excuse when invited for a drive or a walk, but this morning—well, she was going to meet Paul Thornton.

Thornton was seated in the rear office, busily engaged with his father on some business matters, when the couple entered. Miss Arnold dropped her letter in the box, managing to look through the delivery window as she did so, but no one was in sight. She turned towards the show-case as if to make a purchase when her escort discovered young Thornton.

“Hello, Paul! When did you get back?” he cried, excusing himself a moment and advancing to the other end of the room.

Miss Arnold looked up quickly and glanced towards the private office, her face burning with blushes.

“How are you?” answered Paul leaving the office and meeting his friendly neighbor. “Why, I came in last night. Yes, we had a delightful trip. No, the boys

will not be in for a few days yet. The new sensation? Why—yes—is that—”

“ Why, what is the matter, Paul? You are as pale as a corpse. Goodness, man, you are trembling like a leaf! ” he whispered.

“ It’s nothing serious, I assure you,” replied Paul, quickly pulling himself together. “ I am not feeling just right this morning.”

“ Miss Arnold, allow me to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Thornton. Mr. Thornton, Miss Arnold.”

“ Delighted to meet you, Miss Arnold,” lifting his hat.

“ Thank you,” was the soft, feminine reply, nearly inaudible.

“ Mr. Thornton has just returned from the mountains,” said her escort trying to help her out of her evident embarrassment.

“ Yes, I hardly look upon you as a stranger,” began Paul, “ you appear so well and favorably known to all my friends. Why, Miss Arnold, I have heard so much of you the past ten hours that I caught myself trying to invent an excuse to call on you to-day, and if I believed in flattery—”

“ Oh, please don’t! Mr. Thornton, I beg of you,” she cried, crushing the attempt at flattery. “ I am blushing already.”

“ Blushes speak louder than words, Miss Arnold,” suggested her escort.

“ But words are often meaningless,” said Thornton, “ and that is why I detest flattery.”

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Miss Arnold tried her best to appear natural, but the effort was a signal failure and she realized it. In trying to cover her blushes and nervousness she made matters worse, and her escort marvelled at the change in her as they returned up town. Mrs. Overton noticed it, too, and did not stop until she knew the truth.

"Pshaw! You make a mountain out of a mole hill. Don't worry, my dear girl," said Mrs. Overton, soothingly. "I know Mr. Thornton better than you. Mark my words, he will call on you before the day ends."

"I hope so," she replied, "for I would like to show him I am not a silly booby."

"He is not so critical as you imagine. Forget about it, May, and get ready to meet him this evening."

Mrs. Overton sent a note to him during the day, requesting an informal call after dinner, which was promptly accepted, and at eight o'clock that evening his ring at the door was answered by Miss Arnold, with Mrs. Overton in the background.

"We are delighted to see you," they both cried.

He followed them to the drawing room, radiantly illuminated for the special occasion with a dozen or more wax candles in elegant brass candle-sticks, besides the brilliant chandelier, which gave the elegantly furnished room a charming appearance, and added to the beauty of the occasion was Miss Arnold, tastefully dressed in a dainty cream-colored silk, with slippers to match. A pretty necklace adorned her neck, a small locket-shaped pendant suspended in front in the centre of which sparkled a good-sized diamond, while her

wealth of golden hair was held in place by a single brooch of old gold, studded with a row of small diamonds. Her face was as radiant as a June rose and she was the picture of a seraph, and one that did not fail to attract the young man.

He was seated on the divan with the young beauty and Mrs. Overton occupied a rocker close by.

“Miss Arnold, tell me what you think of Princeton and her environments, and how you have managed to pass the time,” asked Paul.

“I think it is perfectly lovely here, Mr. Thornton, and as to the enjoyment, Mrs. Overton will bear me out in saying that no one ever had a happier time. It has been one continual round of pleasure to me ever since I made my debut into your society.”

“You surprise me with your enthusiasm,” honestly spoke he. “I only regret that I was not here to aid in making your visit among us so pleasant, but I see that nothing was lacking.”

“We all regretted your absence,” spoke up Mrs. Overton.

“We did, indeed!” added Miss Arnold, “but I presume you were enjoying the chase for game. Tell us of your trip.”

A brief outline of their trip was recited, and Paul painted a glowing picture when referring to the scenic grandeur of the country through which he passed. He confessed he lacked words to fittingly describe the beauties of the wooded mountains, but his graphic account was listened to with interest.

“Perfectly grand!” exclaimed Miss Arnold. “Some

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day," she added, "I am going to see that country with my own eyes," little thinking that in a few weeks her prophetic remarks would become a reality.

"All right, May," said Mrs. Overton, "I will go along. Possibly we can induce Mr. Thornton to be our guide."

"Nothing would please me better," he replied, "in fact, I expect to return there the coming summer."

"That is just the thing, Mrs. Overton," cried Miss Arnold, enthusiastically. "Suppose we get up a party and go with Mr. Thornton next summer. I will bring some friends along from New Jersey."

"Are you from New Jersey?" asked Paul eagerly.

"Jersey is my native state," said the blushing girl.

"I once had an intimate friend in New Jersey," he said.

"A lady friend, Mr. Thornton?" asked the widow, smiling, and Miss Arnold held her breath awaiting the answer.

"Oh, certainly," laughing. "I have no intimate gentlemen friends."

"Of course," said the widow, "but Jersey girls are all wool and a yard wide, aren't they, May?"

"That is a leading question, Mrs. Overton," suggested Paul. "Of course Miss Arnold has only bouquets for her home girls."

"I don't know about that," said May. "Girls are pretty much alike the world over."

"I don't agree with you, Miss Arnold," said he. "My experience with them gives me a very different idea."

"Oh, I will submit that once in a great while one will find a peculiar character, but as a rule, taking into consideration rank and station, there is a remarkable similarity."

"Your sex has a most charming defender, and I am glad to hear you hold up for them. I will frankly admit that my experience has been limited, and I yield the point." At which all three laughed and the subject drifted into other channels, and soon the visitor took his leave.

"A most wonderful coincidence," thought Paul on his way home from Mrs. Overton's. "She is the exact counterpart of my mysterious queen. When I caught sight of her at the store this morning I was sure it was 'Sweetheart,' and I almost fell to the floor, I was so startled. They are as much alike as twin sisters—same height, the same sparkling eyes, the same haunting expressions, and the same type of beauty. Strange that I should meet two such lovely creatures, so very much alike, within a few days."

Thus he mused until he reached his room. The picture of the two angelic creatures haunted his dreams and he awoke the next morning to find his thoughts still concentrated upon them.

"There is such a marked similarity between them," finally thought Paul, as he descended to the dining-hall. The sudden idea that they might be related struck him very forcibly.

"They are sisters," was the mental conclusion. "Why did I not think of it last night? I must see her to-day, but how? Curse the luck! Ah, I have it! I

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will go for a drive. Just the thing, an early morning drive," and twenty minutes later the Thornton carriage stood in front of the Overton residence while Paul was quietly waiting in the reception room for the return of Miss Arnold, who seemed greatly pleased at the mention of a drive, and hurried away to don a driving costume.

"So kind of you, Mr. Thornton, to give me such pleasure. A morning drive is delicious in this climate, and this is a perfect day."

"Don't mention it, Miss Arnold. You forget that the enjoyment is not confined to yourself alone. I seldom drive, but I must confess I was not aware that such an outing would prove so refreshing. This is a lovely morning."

"Lovely! It is heavenly!" she replied, intoxicated with the pleasure of the occasion.

They endeavored to make themselves agreeable to each other, and the drive of several miles was greatly relished. They chatted gaily, and more than once the merry laugh of his happy companion reverberated in the valley through which they drove.

Paul found that it was no easy matter to introduce the subject that was uppermost in his thoughts. He realized that he must be cautious, and during their drive of five miles he was no nearer the solution of the problem than when he awoke in the early morning.

Reaching one of the natural parks so numerous in that country, he suggested a halt. The proposition was willingly agreed to, and she was out of the carriage and scampering after a butterfly before

Paul could turn round. She was full of life, and especially merry and gay on this gladsome day. They finally discovered an inviting retreat and threw themselves at full length on the grass.

"Do you know," began Paul, desperately, "that you remind me of a young lady I met the other day, so much so, in fact, that I took you for her, for a moment when I met you at the store?"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, I never saw two persons so exactly alike."

"Then I have a double," she suggested.

"Most assuredly. Have you a sister or relative whom you resemble?"

"N-o-o—I do not call to mind anyone who bears so remarkable a resemblance," she replied in deep thought. "I have no sisters, myself and an only brother, with papa and mama, is the sum total of our family."

"I am disappointed, Miss Arnold. I was so in hopes that you were related."

"You greatly excite my curiosity," said Miss Arnold, rising to a sitting position, quickly followed by Paul. "Is she an intimate acquaintance?"

"No, and yes," said Paul. "I met her on my recent trip for the first time, the conditions of which I am not at liberty to tell you. Suffice it to say, I discovered her under the most remarkable circumstances, the mere mention of which, no doubt, excites your interest, and I would not have referred to it but for the fact of the extraordinary likeness you bear to her."

"Did you expect to meet a sister of mine up in the mountains?" she asked.

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"No—I—I don't know what I thought, Miss Arnold," confused. "Let us drop the subject. I hope you will not mention it to anyone."

"I'll keep your secret, Mr. Thornton," she said rather stiffly, rising to her feet.

"It *is* a secret, Miss Arnold, at least for the present," he replied, getting up and following her towards the carriage.

The return drive was devoid of interest; the sunshine that so pleasantly lit up her life an hour ago was apparently left in the park. Paul noted a reserve in her manner, but was happily ignorant of the truth. When nearing town Miss Arnold forced a smile and affected a gaiety natural to her, but a close observer would have readily detected the artificial demeanor of the disappointed girl.

Miss Arnold dropped her mask when she entered the house. She was not going to allow Mrs. Overton to know of her troubles. She came to Princeton with a purpose, and to accomplish that undertaking was her sole purpose.

"I will win," she exclaimed, "or die in the attempt. Sometimes I am tempted to confess and throw myself upon his mercy. But I will do that only as a last resort. I will first discover whether there is a chance to reach his heart without resorting to desperate means. He is mine by rights, and mine he must—he shall be!"

"Oh, that I could recall the past," she murmured, throwing herself on the bed, her eyes filling with tears. "Why was I so foolish? Oh, my God!" she sobbed, "give me back the old days. He despises me! I am

completely shut out of his big, manly heart, one that once throbbed and yearned for me. I have no right to murmur, for it was all my own fault. Heavens! how blind! To purposely avoid him. The fact drives me mad."

To look upon the unhappy girl as she rolled and tossed, with disheveled hair, and eyes red and swollen with weeping, tears of grief and anguish, a heart filled with sadness, and a spirit utterly crushed and depressed,—to look upon this sad and prostrate form, one could hardly believe it was the same cheerful, happy, winsome, enchanting beauty that met young Thornton in the early morning.

It was in this heart-broken condition Mrs. Overton found her before the luncheon hour. One glance at the disconsolate girl told her that her guest was suffering the pangs of great disappointment.

"I will not disturb her, poor thing. I wonder what he said to her to cause such grief," quickly making her exit. "I don't understand that girl," she continued, "she was in love with Paul before she came here. I call to mind how deeply interested she became every time I mentioned his name. Well," she sighed, "I am sure I don't understand it, at all, for they had never met, that is certain. She just made up her mind to fall in love with him and did so—but—but, he does not reciprocate, and yet he appeared greatly smitten. Well, I just don't understand it. I suppose it will turn out for the best."

Miss Arnold recognized the presence of her hostess

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in her room, and congratulated herself that Mrs. Overton left her so suddenly.

“She thinks I am sleeping, the good soul. I must get up and dress before she returns. It must be late,” she thought, making a hasty toilet, and skipping down the stairs, greeting Mrs. Overton with her usual cheerful manner.

“Luncheon is ready, my dear, so let’s go. Did you enjoy your drive?”

“It was splendid, Mrs. Overton,” came the blushing answer.

“I dare say,” was the reply, “Mr. Thornton is a capital entertainer.”

“I was mistaken,” she thought. “Yes,” she replied aloud, “he can be agreeable, but I am told he is greatly changed.”

“How, when!” asked Miss Arnold.

“He went up to New York last summer on a month’s business trip—”

“Yes, yes!” interrupted Miss Arnold.

Mrs. Overton looked at her guest in keen surprise, but did not give vent to her thoughts.

“Well, he came home a very different man. He reminded me of a discharged inmate of a Keeley institute, but he never drank. He was sober to a fault, and seemed to shun all society, and finally went away for several months. It was rumored that he was studying for the ministry, but upon his return, he was more like his old self, in fact was as full of fun as ever, so the idea of his becoming a minister vanished.”

"How do you account for his conduct when he returned from New York?"

"I will tell my version of it, Miss Arnold. Some pretty girl like you crossed his path."

"And won his heart only to break it;" suggested her guest.

"Exactly, my dear girl, exactly,"

"And no doubt lived to regret it. Well, if she did, I am sorry for her."

"One could almost fancy you have had a little experience along that line yourself, May, from your words and sighs."

"Mrs. Overton, 'I could a tale unfold,'—you know the rest."

"Well, I am waiting in breathless suspense, May, dear. I am ready for the unfoldment."

"No, no, not now, I spoke hastily," exclaimed her guest, subsiding.

"Now I am positive," said the widow, inaudibly, and the reader can guess at her meaning.

CHAPTER XI

THE BREWING OF A SCANDAL

A WEEK had gone by and Paul was busy arranging business matters for a trip to a certain Virginia city, having already been granted a leave of absence from his senior partner. He had thought of taking his father into his confidence, but necessity did not require it, and he said nothing.

He had spent a great deal of his time with Miss Arnold during the week, and every evening they could be seen taking a drive. People began to talk of their growing intimacy, and that it would terminate in a wedding was generally conceded.

More than one young man cursed the fellow who monopolized the young lady's time, while two or three still retained a hope that it was but a passing flirtation, and continued their visits to the Overton residence. Miss Arnold encouraged their attentions, although she cared nothing for their company, thinking, no doubt, they might be used as convenient tools, in her plans for bringing the man she loved to her feet.

The climax was reached one evening, when Paul had neglected the usual drive, and when the following day no sign of his coming was in evidence, she yielded to

one of her admirers and accepted an invitation for a drive. They were just starting for the carriage when Thornton drove up. She was in a quandary. Her confusion was clearly shown in her face as she looked from one to the other.

"Were you going out?" asked Paul, not noticing her embarrassment.

"Why—why—yes," she began, "I was not expecting you."

"Don't let me interfere with your arrangements, Miss Arnold, I merely called to make some apologies and to pay my respects."

"If you will go in, Mr. Thornton, I will give up the drive, for, really, I don't care to go—"

"Yes, we'll await your pleasure in the matter, Thornton," interrupted the young man with a sneer.

"Very good of you, neighbor to remind me of my embarrassing position, and I'll bid you a pleasant adieu," with a polite bow, his cheeks scarlet.

Jumping into his carriage, "A pleasant drive!" he added, waving his hand to Miss Arnold and driving rapidly down the avenue.

She had answered Paul's parting salute, but never moved, watching the retreating figure.

"That is what I call impertinence and audacity with a vengeance—the brazen-faced puppy!" hissed the young fellow with towering passion.

"I will give you to understand, sir," began Miss Arnold, her eyes snapping, "that Mr. Thornton is a friend of mine, and I consider your remarks ungentle-

manly in the extreme.—You may go, sir!” and lifting her skirts, she turned her back on him and ran up the steps, quickly disappearing in doors.

Without a word he walked down to the waiting carriage, climbed in and hastily started away, when he discovered Henry King, who had been a silent witness to the incidents from the opposite side of the avenue, and he halted.

“I didn’t know of your return, jump in.”

“Thanks, old man, I was greatly interested in the movements in front of the Overton residence. Pardon the question, but what was the trouble?”

“Oh, nothing serious,” he replied trying hard to conceal his ugly temper.

“Fine looking girl, that, Hank, but she appeared out of sorts.”

“Darned fool!” muttered Hank.

“You, or the girl, Hank?”

“I guess you are about right,” he replied.

“She is a stunner, and that’s no dream,” said Henry. “I nearly fell dead when I first met her.”

“Met her? I thought you told me you had just arrived home?”

“So I did,” said Henry, enjoying the surprise of his friend, “but I guess I saw her before you ever heard of her.”

“When? where?”

“Ask Thornton.” he replied. “Perhaps he wouldn’t thank me if I talked too much.”

“To hades with Thornton, he only met her a week

ago, the cad. I introduced him, and he has been running after her ever since."

"Don't be deceived, Henry, my boy, they were acquainted long before you met her."

"The devil they were! Are you sure Henry?"

"Well, I guess."

"Aha! that accounts for his peculiar actions when he first discovered her here," said Hank, referring to Paul's white face, the morning of the introduction. "Tell me all about it, old man, I'll promise to say nothing. Here, have a smoke," producing his cigar case.

"If you will give me your word, not to mention it to anyone, I will tell you," replied Henry, lighting a cigar. (Henry had exacted this promise from at least a dozen other people the past four hours.)

"You have my word," was the reply, as the horse jogged slowly along.

"When our party reached the summit of one of those mountains that almost touch the sky, the third morning out from the upper forks," began the recital, "Thornton disappeared very mysteriously and was not heard of until the following morning, when I ran across him in company with the young lady you just quitted."

"Who quitted me," interrupted Hank, "but are you sure, Henry? This lady came from the east with Mrs. Overton just about that time."

"Mrs. Overton's return from her alleged Eastern visit was the second day after the morning I met this young lady and Paul in the mountains," emphatically insisted Henry.

"You may be right, at least we will not argue that

point, but tell me how he came to get mixed up with the girl."

"As I was saying," continued Henry, "I met the couple coming down the river bank, and my sudden appearance knocked Thornton clear out in the first round. He looked daggers at me, and I knew he was not pleased to have me get onto his secret. He tried to hide his confusion and his face softened presently, giving me a seemingly hearty greeting and directing me to a cabin up the road, where he told me I could get breakfast."

"Did he introduce her to you?"

"No, she walked on when we first met."

"Of course he told her to."

"I suppose so. Well I passed on. The girl had on a long cloak that completely covered her from head to feet, but her face was that of an angel, and I was at a loss to know who she was. At the cabin I was told Thornton and his sister had spent the night."

"That settles it."

"But I could get no further information from the old duffer. When he found out I was seeking information he closed his mouth, locked his lips with a padlock, and threw the key into the well."

"I see it all, now," said the wise Mr. Hank, "and yet I can't understand how Mrs. Overton got mixed up in it."

"The widow has always been exceedingly friendly to Thornton," suggested Henry.

"That's a fact," answered Hank, giving the team an about face command, followed by an unconscious crack of the whip that startled the horses into a brisk trot.

"It is hard to believe that Mrs. Overton would knowingly harbor a girl of questionable character, and introduce her into society," added Hank after a pause.

"Why, man!" exclaimed Henry, "she is no doubt ignorant of the facts. Thornton is one of those goody-goody Sunday school fellows and concocted a nice little tale that was easily swallowed. He is shrewd enough for that."

"Oh, he's a damnable hypocrite! I always said so, but you can't make the people believe it. They all worship the gay deceiver and I will be glad when the props are knocked from under him and the cunning, false-hearted Judas is shown up in his true colors."

"They say he treats his old girl friends with contempt now," added Henry.

"Well, I should say so," was the reply, "why, he almost lives up at Overton's. It's a shame that our people should allow the girl to stay here and for one I am in favor of giving her her walking papers."

"I would advise that you warn Mrs. Overton and let her dispose of her guest."

"She wouldn't believe it," he broke in. "No, I believe in starting at the girl. I will see you this evening, Henry, and in the meantime we will consider the best plan to pursue in the matter."

"It seems to me, upon second thought," said Henry, gaining the sidewalk in front of his home, "that after all, Thornton is to blame for the whole thing and he should be made to answer, but I will see you down town to-night."

"Very well," replied Hank, who drove on, wrapped

in deep thought as he recalled the story he had just heard.

"Aha! my fine girl," he chuckled, thinking of his abrupt dismissal, "the tide has turned. I don't believe half of it, but it serves my purpose to encourage report, and Henry will put it into circulation; he's built that way. I'll stay in the background and let him do the work. If it's all a mistake, and I know it is, it will come out all right, but the girl will not be so darned haughty and stuck up hereafter. It'll teach her a lesson and before the thing blows over she will find that Paul Thornton is not the whole thing."

CHAPTER XII

“I AM JEALOUS OF THAT WOMAN!”

BEFORE morning the old town was ringing with a scandal, the like of which was never before known in Princeton, and wholly ignorant of the infamous attempt of the oily-tongued scandal-mongers to blacken his character and to bring disgrace and ignominy down on his head, Paul Thornton took the early morning stage for an extended visit in Virginia.

He spent the previous evening at the Overton residence. He enjoyed the company of Miss Arnold far more than he would admit, and it was the giving up of her society that caused him to heave a sigh of regret at leaving the town.

When he told her of his contemplated departure, tears filled her eyes and she begged him to stay. Then it was that he made a discovery. She loved him. He read it in her face, her words, her action.

“If you go, Mr. Thornton, I shall pack my trunk to-morrow,” she said to him.

“Why, my dear Miss Arnold, you flatter me. Come now, honor bright, did you not enjoy Princeton equally as much, if not more, before I came?”

“If I did, Mr. Thornton, pardon me for my frankness, it was in anticipation of meeting you.”

“Can this be true, Miss Arnold?”

“Do not despise me, Mr. Thornton,” seating herself on a stool at his feet, “my heart is running over and to allow you to go out of my sight, perhaps forever, was more than I could bear. I humbly confess my weakness, but my love for you is so overwhelming that I trample decorum under my feet. Forgive me Mr. Thornton, do not hate me,” she cried, her face covered with her hands.

“Hate you, Miss Arnold? No, I never could do that. Forgive you? You have done nothing demanding forgiveness from me. It is poor me that should beg forgiveness. I should have recognized the truth long ere this. No, wait until I get through, dear,” stroking her pretty hair that had become loosened. “I appreciate your feelings fully and your confession does not lessen my regard for you in the least. I feel honored to have the love of the woman I so greatly admire. I do not deserve such homage, but I will acknowledge that your words sounded sweetly in my ears, and while my heart does not beat in unison with yours, there is no one I esteem greater. When we know more of each other; when you have given the subject mature thought, and we have carefully weighed the consequences, if you are then impregnated with the same admiration and respect so sweetly displayed to-night, I do not hesitate to say that I will be prepared to offer you a more fitting response, and I assure you that you will always occupy a warm place in my thoughts as well as my heart.”

He lifted her head and a loving smile lit up her

blushing face. She got up immediately and sat by his side, her hand still in his. He wanted to take her in his arms, but he resisted the mad desire.

“When you go away,” she began, with becoming modesty, “the girl who acted so silly will be forgotten. I know you are honest and good, Mr. Thornton, and you are sincere in all you say, but——”

“You wrong me, Miss Arnold, and I am already regretting that I have an engagement out of the city.”

“To see some girl?”

“Yes, your double. But do not ask me to particularize for as much as I would like to tell you I am not ready to invite even your confidence at present, some time I will tell you everything.”

“I am jealous of that woman,” she said, panting.

“Taking into consideration the fact of your almost perfect likeness, and my respect for you, I do not blame you, for truly, when I see you I am constantly thinking of her, and when I see her, she will be a pleasant reminder of you. So you see, you will not be forgotten.”

“When do you return?”

“That is a question I wish I could answer, but I cannot.”

“Then you will not find me here when you get back,” she said, coquettishly.

“New Jersey is but a step when one wants to reach the side of one he desires to see. You will keep me posted as to your movements?”

“Yes, if you will leave your address,” she replied.

“With pleasure,” pencilling an address on a card and handing it to her.

“Thank you,” said she, studying the card.

It was after midnight when Paul finally took his leave, and as he was bidding her good-by he could not resist the upturned face and his lips met hers for the first time. Paul was not a little surprised on leaving the Overton residence to see several figures emerge from the premises and scamper away in the darkness. Involuntarily he followed them to the next corner, when he discovered quite a knot of townspeople, but being of an uninquisitive nature his curiosity was not sufficiently aroused to stop and make inquiries.

His mind was full of the girl who had so recently made love to him. He little thought that the object of the crowd he passed was to aid in quickening the gathering clouds that continued to grow blacker and blacker in the eyes of the envoys of gossip, and had he been told of their mission it is doubtful if his peace of mind would have been disturbed, for were not these meek and lowly tale-bearers his friends.

CHAPTER XIII

A PUBLIC INDIGNATION MEETING

"A TELEGRAM for you, Mrs. Overton," called Miss Arnold from the foot of the stairs.

Miss Arnold was astir early the morning following her confession of love to the man she had sworn to win. The doors of the post-office were just thrown open when she entered, and it was with trembling fingers that she turned the key in the Overton lock box. She hoped to reach the office before the departure of the overland stage, but learned to her regret it had gone an hour ago.

"He's gone," was her mental comment, slowly retracing her steps. In the packet of letters she discovered the telegram, which had been mailed from the nearest telegraph office, some twenty miles away. The sight of this strange envelope quickened her walk. It seemed to burn her fingers, and she was nearly out of breath when she called to Mrs. Overton.

The widow was yet in bed when May's startling information reached her, and not stopping to dress she came rushing down stairs in her sleeping costume, excitement clearly shown in her looks and movements.

It is a remarkable fact that a telegram in the possession of one not accustomed to handling it unnerves

the recipient. It deprives one of power to speak, and an unaccountable weakness pervades one's body as though paralyzed.

Mrs. Overton was pale and frightened as she accepted the little message. She handled it with as much caution as if the envelope contained explosives instead of a harmless sheet of paper. She turned it over and over, apparently without strength to break the seal. Gazing at it in utter helplessness, her mind pictured all the ills imaginable. That it was a summons to the bedside of some dying relative she was positive and her heart was throbbing so madly that she could feel its rapid strokes, while her thoughts flew through space until they had circumnavigated the globe, stopping momentarily at every point inhabited by a friend or relative.

"Why don't you open it?" inquired Miss Arnold, after a hasty glance at her own two letters. "It may be important."

Thus stirred into action, the seal was broken, and with quivering lips she read aloud the brief message: "Father is seriously ill, come at once."

Instead of going into hysterics as Miss Arnold expected, the panic-stricken widow immediately regained her tranquillity. In place of sorrow and tears, a sigh as of relief escaped her.

"You will go?" said Miss Arnold.

"I suppose I must, but how will we arrange it?"

"Easily enough," was the reply. "My interest in Princeton has vanished with the disappearance of your Mr. Paul, and we will both go."

"There is no conveyance before to-morrow, so we will have the day in which to prepare," accepting the proposal of her guest without comment.

"I will go with you as far as the cross-roads where we take opposite directions and then for home, while you—I am awfully sorry for you, Mrs. Overton."

"Thank you, May. It will be a sad home-coming for me, but, my dear, no sadder than my last home-leaving." Tears, the first, now filled her eyes, and she went into an adjoining room.

"All is not gold that glitters," murmured Miss Arnold, looking after the retreating figure. "I would never have guessed that a skeleton was in her closet. Ah, well," she sighed, "nobody escapes trouble in this world."

They denied themselves to all callers throughout the day, and there seemed to be an unusual clatter at the door-bell. Had some of those seeking admission on that fatal day gained an entrance, Mrs. Overton would have imparted information, giving the wild rumors afloat a death blow. Unfortunately for her guest as well as for Mr. Thornton, damaging rumors now on every tongue did not reach her, and the fact that the doors of her house were closed was accepted to mean but one thing. Mrs. Overton had discovered the truth and was so overwhelmed with the conspicuous part she had played in the matter, that she had shut herself up and refused to see anyone.

Late that afternoon she appeared on the street in search of the stage driver, desiring to make arrangements for to-morrow's stage. She attracted unusual

attention, not only because she had sheltered a virtuous woman, but because she had introduced the "haughty, brazen thing" into their homes, as one woman put it.

The innocent victim of these unlimited expressions of denunciation and abuse, gave additional credence to the flying reports by the grave face and sad countenance, so unnatural to her. She passed along the street with no smiles nor courtesies which formerly characterized her appearance among her acquaintances, but the crowning act in the sensational farce, the engagement for passage out of town, created a scene that beggars description.

When the news of the intended departure of Mrs. Overton and her guest spread throughout the town, following so closely the sudden disappearance of Thornton, the excitement among the people was indescribable. The great scandal was the topic in every home and the reports had grown with such rapidity that the circumstantial evidence of yesterday became an absolute certainty to-day. The charge of yesterday that Thornton and Miss Arnold had met in the mountains, was to-day a crime of such magnitude that scores of well known and respectable citizens were ready to hang the victims.

An impromptu meeting was held later in the evening to discuss the affair. Some one suggested that the two women be given a coat of tar and feathers before they left. This suggestion brought the minister to his feet, who counseilled the people to do nothing rash.

"Quit ye like men," he exclaimed. "What is the

cause of all this excitement? What proofs have we of the grave charges against these people, two of whom heretofore enjoyed our full confidence and love? Look back at the life of Paul Thornton. You will all agree that he was a model young man, and, previous to this, there was not a blot on his good name. Mark my words, friends, that boy is not guilty of the charges against him. Let us not condemn him until there is tangible proof of his guilt. We can easily do things in our haste and excitement which we afterwards regret. Let us quietly leave this place and go back to our homes."

Following these timely remarks came an outburst of applause. The mob was sobered by the well chosen words, and manifested its approval of the suggestions by quickly dispersing.

CHAPTER XIV

PAUL AND HIS MOUNTAIN MYSTERY

WHEN Paul reached his destination late in the afternoon of the day following his embarkation on the old stage coach, he set out on foot for the well known boarding house. His object in bringing the mysterious young woman here was two-fold,—to escape the gossip of home people, and to give her the benefit of the healing influence of his friend Brownlee. He was thinking about her as he wended his way up town, when he came to a sudden standstill.

“ Why do I neglect my business, which is a constant source of worry to father, and come here? ” he asked himself. “ Why was I sent to that lonesome, out of the way spot to rescue a drowning woman? Why do I leave Miss Arnold, who loves me to distraction and who with tear-stained eyes begged and entreated me to stay? ”

Arriving at the house he went direct to her room, and softly pushing the door ajar, discovered the object of his search lying on the bed, reading.

“ May I come in? ”

She recognized the voice instantly and before he had advanced three steps she threw herself into his arms and cried for joy.

"I am so glad you came. What a splendid surprise. Oh, Mr. Thornton, I am *so* happy to see you again."

"Why, sweetheart, you overwhelm me with pleasure to welcome me in this happy manner. I feel like stealing a kiss."

"A dozen if you want them."

"This is splendid, sweetheart," accepting the gifts so freely given. "I am going away often in order to be the recipient of the happy greeting you bestow so sweetly."

"Do not say that, Mr. Thornton. You are not going to leave me again."

"Tell me what you have been doing during my absence?" leading her to a sofa.

"Reading and studying. Your friend Mr. Brownlee has been very good to me. And I am one of his converts. His explanation of the Bible is beautiful. I used to look upon that book, reverenced by all good people, as one of the dullest ever printed, but reading it now with his help it is simply grand. He has a magnificent plan of bringing one into the vibrations of the spirit, as he puts it."

"I see you have succumbed to his advanced thoughts, sweetheart, which gives me great pleasure. It was for this purpose I brought you here."

"Then I fell into the trap very nicely, didn't I?"

"The bait was alluring. No one who anxiously seeks knowledge of the great I Am will reject the Truth and Wisdom, as taught by Mr. Brownlee. When you come into the Word, as you will, you will see things with different eyes, and your understanding will

enable you to not only look into the future but the past."

"Oh, Mr. Thornton, that point was so beautifully explained by Mr. Brownlee, and that is the demonstration that I am constantly demanding."

"Ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you," repeated Paul.

The gong sounded, announcing the dinner hour. The appearance of this couple in the dining hall was hailed with delight by all their friends, and Brownlee in particular, who expressed his surprise and pleasure.

"We were just discussing you when that awful gong went off," she said, taking her accustomed place by the side of Brownlee.

"I thought so," he replied, "my ears are still burning."

"Which one,—the right? Then I need not say that you suffered nothing from the discussion. By the way, I did not tell you of my dream, did I?"

"A dream? No, tell us. I am a great believer in dreams."

"Are you, truly? Then I will speak to you about it later and have you make an interpretation."

"Very well, if that is your desire," and Paul nodded approvingly to Brownlee.

"Pardon me for changing the subject," spoke up Paul, "but I came out with Louis Rhinehart, the great actor, and his sixty people. He is here for three nights only and we must see him——"

"Has that any reference to your dream?" asked Mr. Brownlee.

"It has," she replied in astonishment.

"I thought so. The demonstration will be complete to-morrow evening," he said half aloud.

"I will secure a box at once," said Paul, feeling that all things work together for good, and longing to get away to secure the tickets.

"Yes, go down at once, Thornton. Tickets were on sale a week ago and good seats are not secured at the last moment," said Brownlee.

Paul left the young lady in a brisk engagement with his old chum on a question of minor importance, and started for the opera house. It was nearly dusk and he did not notice the phantom-like form that glided out from the doorway on the opposite side of the street and followed stealthily in his wake, keeping at a safe distance so as to escape detection.

He reached the box office of the Grand Opera house at last, having to stand in line and take his turn with the hundreds of others on the same errand, while the ghostly figure that was shadowing him mingled in the crowd, taking care to watch his every movement.

"A box for Thursday evening," breathed she, and she made her way out of the mob to the sidewalk, pausing long enough to re-enter the trail.

Paul had a mission to perform over on the South side and as he wanted to get it off his mind he decided to go there at once.

"It will take but an hour, and I will have all day to-morrow for her," he thought.

It was a merry chase he gave his shadow. The vicinity he visited was but sparsely populated and no street

car line had invaded it. The way was circuitous and it was with difficulty he made his way in the darkness.

"This is more than I bargained for," said the feminine shadow, as she paused to take breath. "My ankle is sprained already and my head is bursting with pain. I will have to give it up for to-night. I wonder if I will ever be able to find my way home," she said peering out into the darkness and feeling most uncomfortable.

The fear that pervaded her as she realized her lonely position gave her renewed activity and she plunged into the darkness with surprising energy. Presently she came to a bridge, and as she was positive that she had crossed no stream on her wild-goose chase, she was undecided what to do, when she detected the form of some one advancing towards her from the darkness.

"I beg pardon, sir, but will you kindly direct me towards the North side. I want to reach College street."

The gentleman, for it proved to be such, gave her the desired information, but advised her to allow him to accompany her, as she could never make her way alone.

"No, thank you, sir, I am confident I will be able to follow the direction given. You are very kind," and she pushed on. Reaching the north end of the long and lonesome bridge, she turned towards the west and cautiously glided along the road, stumbling over rocks and invading numerous swamps and marshy places, until she was worn out as well as disgusted. A reaction occurred a moment later, however, when she came in sight of an electric light and she forgot her ills.

Restored in mind and reinforced in action, she was tripping along at a rapid gait when she ran right into the arms of a big policeman.

“Aha, my fine lady, what brings you here at this time of night?” fell upon her ears.

“I was over on the South side to see a friend,” she began, but was interrupted.

“That’s what they all say. I guess you had better go along with me.”

“Oh, good sir,” she pleaded, “I beg you to release me. I am not what you think.”

“Where were you going?” he asked briskly.

“To my boarding-house on College street.”

“Do you attend the seminary?”

“No—that is—not now,” she replied, trying to keep back the tears.

“I had forgotten that it is vacation. Well, I will let you go this time, but I would advise that you make no more such trips all alone. Now go ‘long,” at last speaking in a kindly tone, and she did go, as fast as her feet could carry her, avoiding the “cops” thereafter.

CHAPTER XV

A PANIC-STRICKEN AUDIENCE

THURSDAY was a dismal, misty day, but Paul and his friends were not greatly influenced by the melancholic atmosphere that enveloped the city. While other people were complaining; some going so far as to curse the weather, this jolly trio spent the day in solid enjoyment, playing, singing, romping and reading, and it was in this happy frame of mind they left the carriage that evening and were ushered into the box at the opera house. They arrived late and consequently attracted no little attention from the vast audience that filled the handsome little play-house. Every opera-glass was turned toward their box, and many smothered exclamations might have been heard upon all sides as they discovered the beautiful woman. She was dressed with exquisite taste, and her dazzling jewels added brilliancy to her queenly appearance.

“Who is she?” was on every tongue, but there was no satisfactory answer from any direction.

But there was one who seemed entranced, judging from her manner. She was in the balcony, second row, where she had a splendid view of our friends in the box, and her opera-glass was turned in that direction throughout the performance. The tragic scenes on the

stage had no attractions for this young lady who noted every movement of the trio from the time they entered. She was modestly attired and a pair of golden eye-glasses adorned her nose, but a certain policeman on the South side would have recognized her in spite of the glasses. Paul's shadow, for such she was, had selected a position where she could see without being seen, except by her neighbors who marvelled greatly that the audience had more attractions for her than the stage. A close observer would have noted the constant changing expression of her face as she watched every action of the occupants of the box, and more than once a frown disturbed her naturally sweet expression.

"That is my double," she said, inaudibly, when she first caught sight of Paul and his friends. "He is right," after a careful survey of her rival as she regarded her. "If we are so much alike in every way," she thought, "her costly gowns and magnificent jewels will naturally overshadow me in his estimation."

The play had caught the audience and the house rang with applause from time to time, and no one appeared more pleased or captivated than the feminine stranger in the box. Her whole soul was in the play and in the third act she could almost feel that she was the royal Duchess, who, in her regal beauty and surroundings, had succeeded in capturing her subjects, as she had her audience.

Both Brownlee and Thornton were watching their pretty charge and noting her enthusiasm. The young lady in the balcony, also recognized her fascination and

her eyes swept the stage to find the cause of the entrancing picture.

"A scene of royalty," she muttered, half aloud. "She is of the aristocracy, but how on earth did he get acquainted with her?" eagerly watching her rival.

The curtain slowly descended and was raised again almost instantly, presenting a change of scene that was most dazzling in its brilliancy, showing the lawn and gardens of the royal palace in all their glory and splendor, a scenic display that never had its equal upon an American stage.

Midst the almost deafening applause following this elaborate and crowning spectacular scene, came a piercing scream that filled the vast auditorium and stilled the enthusiasm of the multitude.

"It is she!" stammered the balcony girl, on her feet in an instant.

Every eye was turned towards the box where confusion reigned supreme. Quickly taking the lifeless form in his arms Paul hastened out of the box and quietly made his exit through a side door, and placed her in one of the many carriages that lined the street. Mr. Brownlee followed them in silence, after giving the driver proper directions.

"Speak to me, sweetheart," said Paul, his face wet with perspiration, his right hand stroking her forehead gently and his pulse at fever heat.

"Calm yourself, Thornton, there's no danger," said Brownlee.

Nothing more was said until they reached her room, which occupied but a few minutes' hasty drive.

The audience was panic-stricken over the incident and the gladsome cheer on every lip over the wonderful stage production was hushed into a deathly silence by the sudden cry that rang out from the box, and which brought every one to his feet with alarm.

The manager appeared in front of the curtain almost immediately and quieted the audience by saying the lady had fainted and was being taken home in a carriage, when the orchestra struck up a lively strain, as though nothing had happened, and the people resumed their seats for the next and final act.

But there was one vacant seat in the balcony. The young lady who attracted the attention of her neighbors in the balcony by her continuous ocular demonstration in the direction of the stage box, hurriedly made her exit after that hysterical shriek, and was in the neighborhood of College street in less than no time, making her plans as she flew over the ground.

There was no excitement at the boarding-house. The fainting form was placed on her bed, Mr. Brownlee was bending silently over her, peering into the ashen-colored face, while Paul had gone for a pitcher of water.

“She moves—her color returns—she lives,” spoke her silent watcher.

“Where am I?” she stammered. “Was it a dream?—Where are all the people?” she raised her head as if to get up, but sank down again, exhausted, her eyes riveted on Mr. Brownlee, who neither moved nor spoke. Soon she dropped off into a deep sleep, and he walked away.

"She is quietly sleeping," he whispered to Paul and the landlady, meeting them at the door. "I will remain here and I want you to go to your room, Thornton, and hold fast to the one thought, you understand?" Paul nodded assent and took his leave.

"I will call you if needed," he said to the landlady, thus dismissing her, and, placing a chair near the head of the bed, went into his room, where he remained until aroused by the soft steps of a visiting angel in the garb of a Sister of Charity.

He motioned her to a seat at the window and she passed on, heaving a sigh of relief as she did so.

An hour went by and not a sound was audible in the room. Presently Mr. Brownlee got up and again looked into the face of the sleeper, and smiled.

"I am glad you are here, sister," he whispered to the veiled lady. "She is sleeping peacefully and I will leave her in your charge. Give her no medicine, under any circumstances. You will find water on the table. If I am wanted, you can find me in the adjoining room," so saying he went out, closing the door softly after him.

"Alone with her!" she said, gliding over to the bedside containing her rival. "I wonder who he is?" referring to Brownlee, "not a physician, surely, and a friend to both of them. What a sweet expression!" looking into the face of her double.

The interested watcher, whom the reader has already recognized as Miss Arnold, was intently looking into the face of the sleeping woman before her. Something in the expression in her sleep gave it a divine sweet-

ness that Miss Arnold characterized as angelic in the extreme, and her womanly instinct was instantly made manifest. The woman she had sworn to hate, she now loved, and she longed to kiss the beautiful lips of her once hated rival.

"How could I find fault with him for idolizing her?" she thought "He couldn't help it. No wonder he left me to go to her. She is goodness personified and has never been guilty of wearing a mask."

Tears filled her eyes as she contemplated the spotless character of the innocent woman, and she compared her with her own miserable self, and she suffered untold agonies, in reviewing her past life.

"But I can't give him up," she cried "no, not for angels. If she knew how I worship him" she moaned, "that my every pulse and heart beat is for him, that life without him would be but an empty dream; if she knew that my future happiness depends upon his love, that it is a question of heaven or hell, life or death with me, who love him to distraction, who would willingly suffer and die for him, if necessary, would she give him up? She will, oh, I know she will."

A restless movement of the sleeper aroused her and she immediately assumed her role of nurse.

"Tell her the Queen insists that she go—no excuses Angelina—Are we not to be friends? Yes—you make me happy—Perfectly lovely! Oh, the great rapids! Come, see! Up there? Magnificent! I am falling—Oh, God—Angelina—please—don't—push—"

Miss Arnold was startled at the enigmatical exclamations and sat in utter astonishment.

"She hates me—Oh! Ugh! Cold—water—help! Queen—drowns—help—will no one—save me—help!
—"

"She is drowning," thought Miss Arnold, "queer dream th—"

"Thank God—yes—safe—but—oh! how dark! The suspense is—awful. I—am chilled, numb—forsaken—no escape. It is death! My head swims—now one more ray of hope. Why did you, Angelina? Did you mean it? Yes—vengeance—this suspense—kills.—I am slip—Good-by my people—palace—mother—lost—I—go—"

"Oh, this is frightful," exclaimed the now excited listener, "I must call him—"

"Heaven—Yes, 'tis Heaven! Oh, how thankful! Who is he? No, not an angel. Wet, how strange! I am dreaming. Splendid—thanks—awfully nice—Mr. Thornton—lovely name. Owe him my life—he swam—I was drowning—how strange. Yes, we are going. The—sun—he calls it—Oceans water. The monster! but how we fly—glorious! Thank you, Mr. Brownlee—Beautiful, beautiful, delighted! He comes! So glad, Mr. Thornton—your—sweetheart. A dream—the people! It is—no—can it—real—now the curtain rises—Mr. Thornton! Mr. Brownlee!"

Her eyes opened—she sat upright.

"You were dreaming, my dear. Won't you lie down again? Here drink this," handing her a glass of water.

"Thank you," she said, softly, sipping the cooling beverage. "I feel better now, but where am I—oh, I see—in my own room. Were we alone?" she asked.

"Your friends are close by, lovey. Now then," arranging the downy pillows, "rest your head here, and go to sleep."

"My friends are all too good. How pleasant—friends," was the almost inaudible response, as she closed her eyes and slept.

Miss Arnold sank down on the chair, weak from the strange words of the dreamer which still rang in her ears. She pondered much over them, and finally became convinced, in her own mind, that her broken sentences were but the echo of some real tragedy. Arriving at this conclusion she commenced to put the mixed sentences together and was weaving a strange story when Mr. Brownlee entered on tip-toe.

"Still sleeping?" he whispered, as though disappointed.

"Just now, yes," spoke Miss Arnold, "but she opened her eyes once and called the names of Mr. Thornton and Mr. Brownlee."

"Did she appear calm or was there a shadow of excitement when she awoke?"

"She appeared calm and restful, and when I assured her that her friends were near, and she recognized her own room, she went to sleep again, almost immediately."

"You must be tired and sleepy," suggested Mr. Brownlee, "and I will relieve you now. Will you occupy a bed in the adjoining room?"

"Thank you," was the answer, "I am no longer needed and will return home."

Miss Arnold was buttoning her glove, and had taken two or three steps towards the door when she paused and half faced the bed, as if undecided about something.

"Will you call again, sister," asked Mr. Brownlee.

"I am not satisfied to go away without telling you about the mutterings of the patient as she slept."

"You are right," said Brownlee, "tell me."

Miss Arnold sat down at once and repeated to him the strange mixture of sentences that fell upon her ears, or as much as she could call to mind.

Brownlee heard her through in silence and without comment and at the close of her narrative, got up and paced up and down the floor, apparently in deep meditation. Presently he paused, and asked her if she had told him all.

"Every word, sir, as I remember it. I suppose it was merely an extravagant dream."

"No, no," he interrupted, "it was full of meaning. She is the victim of a foul plot. This Angelina pushed her into the rapids, she drifts into the darkness, but reaches a momentary retreat, to be again precipitated into the river, and yields to the inevitable, bidding her people, her station and her mother a final good-by. When she is rescued by Thornton she reaches heaven in her imagination—I see it! I see it!" Mr. Brownlee was greatly excited.

"Where did Mr. Thornton rescue the woman?" asked Miss Arnold now full of curiosity, unable to conceal her high-wrought feelings.

"In the river up in the mountains. But what puzzles

me now is how did she get there? but it will all come out. Yes, we have enough evidence to work on. I am glad you thought best to tell me," he said.

Miss Arnold was busy thinking and had not ears for compliments just now. Promising to call again later in the morning, she took her leave.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GREAT MYSTERY SOLVED

SCARCELY had Miss Arnhold quitted the apartment before the door of the bed room again swung noiselessly on its hinges and Paul entered.

"I could wait no longer. How is she?" he whispered.

"Sleeping nicely; come in," replied Brownlee.

"You don't mean to tell me you have been here all night. Why didn't you call me, Brownlee?"

"The nurse just left, Thornton, and the strange story she caught from the sleeper as she talked in her slumbers has given us a clew which if studiously analyzed will go far towards solving the mystery."

"Give me the particulars," said he, his rather haggard-looking face becoming flushed with excitement. "Tell me quick. I am all impatience."

Paul listened to the recital with remarkable serenity, ever and anon a smile of intelligence would flash across his face.

"Not a word that even suggests the name of her country," said Paul, meditating.

"Absolutely nothing."

"Can it be possible that she was one of a party of foreign celebrities who invaded that out of the way

place, decoyed to that lonesome spot by her enemy, that jealous Angelina?"

"Angelina," repeated the late sleeper, rubbing her eyes and turning then towards the speaker, "who speaks of Angelina?"

"Do you know her, sweetheart?" assisting her.

"I once knew a lovely woman by that name," was her reply, arranging her costume, the same that she had worn at the opera.

"Who did you, with all her loveliness, what you consider an unpardonable wrong," suggested Brownlee.

"But one that will be forgiven under certain conditions," added Paul.

"I can forgive, yes; but forget—Never!" she spoke earnestly.

"Then it is true, sweetheart,—your mind penetrates the past and—"

"Your surmise is well grounded my good and faithful friend," she interrupted, falling upon her knees before him, "the past with its pleasures, its sunshine and its horror crowds my brain, and I shudder to think of the distress and grief of my dear friends at home," tears filling her eyes. "Oh, my angel mother, I know you are suffering. I know how your heart aches for your little girl," she sobbed.

"Come, cheer up sweetheart," said Paul soothingly, lifting her from the floor and leading her to a sofa, "you must not forget that you are surrounded by friends, and it will be the one great object of my life to restore you to that mother, and to personally witness

a grand transformation scene when sorrow and tears will be turned to joy unspeakable, and a cheerless home into paradise, by your triumphal return."

"You give me great joy and peace of mind, Mr. Thornton," a smile forcing its way into her face, "God has been good to me, by placing me in your kind hands, as well as those of your most faithful friend, Mr. Brownlee. I shall never forget your kindness."

"All things come to those who wait," repeated Brownlee, coming forward, "we have patiently awaited this hour. We knew the change was coming; we knew that the clouded memory would become clear and bright, and you would be happy. We both feel, too, that with your help you will eventually be restored to your people."

"Thank you, Mr. Brownlee, and I am sure you will both be greatly surprised when you have learned my history."

"We have waited with eager expectation the story you have to tell us," said Paul, "I would not be surprised, however," he added, a merry twinkle in his eyes, "to learn that you dropped down from the skies."

"I have no doubt my appearance up in that scenic country of yours was puzzling enough to give you such an idea," she answered laughing. "dressed as I was in the splendor of a queen, all alone, right in the middle of a stream. But let me relieve your anxiety. The sooner you know the facts, the sooner, with God's help, you will be able to restore to my people a ruler and to my mother her mourned for dead, Olivet."

"Then your name is Olivet? very pretty indeed, sweetheart."

"Yes, Olivet, Queen of the Appalachia."

"Appalachia!" they both exclaimed in unison.

"Never heard of it," said Paul.

"Not on the map, surely," added Brownlee.

"I warned you I was going to surprise you," said the queen, enjoying their surprise.

"I give it up," said the man of learning.

"Then it isn't necessary for me to try," added Paul.

"No, my friend, Appalachia is unknown to the world, and no railroad nor other mode of transportation will take you to our isolated, but magnificent kingdom. At this time I can but guess at the truth, and yet I am pretty sure that when Mr. Thornton touched the drowning form on that eventful day in the great Cumberland Mountains, he was as near the beautiful land of Appalachia as any one has ever been, outside her own people."

"Then you give us to understand that Appalachia is an undiscovered country," said Brownlee, "but that only adds to the mystery. You, her queen, speak our language, are well educated, and intelligently comprehend and make use of our customs, and yet belong to an unknown region."

"It was discovered by your own people, but let me tell you its history. I will be brief."

"That confounded gong!" exclaimed Brownlee.

"I hadn't noticed the gong," spoke up Paul.

"I am awfully hungry," said Queen Olivet, "and

as my story will keep, let us postpone the recital until after breakfast."

This proposition was agreed to, although neither of the gentlemen had a craving appetite, and after a hasty toilet they all went down to the dining hall.

CHAPTER XVII

THE QUEEN'S FASCINATING RECITAL

"YEARS ago," began the Queen, when the trio had reassembled in her room about thirty minutes after leaving the dining hall, "years ago, a colony of pioneers crossed over the great Appalachian Mountains and came to a very large stream. They were in search of a certain section of the uninhabited country which one of the fathers had pictured in a dream, and they directed their movements in accordance therewith. They were not surprised, therefore, to discover the stream and had come prepared to build a craft suitable to carry the party, consisting of eighty-two families, and several thousand pounds of miscellaneous articles, such as beds, wearing apparel, tools, manufactured goods, raw materials, great quantities of food, grain and other seeds, and hundreds of things, to say nothing of machinery and live stock; a complete outfit such as they would require to inhabit a new and raw country.

"The craft was completed in a short time, it was what was called a raft, and made by scores of trees, stripped of their leaves and branches, thrown into the water side by side and kept in place by cross ties securely nailed to each log, making a monster float, and one

capable of carrying the entire cargo and passengers down the stream to the destination.

"It was in the summer time and the excursion was a delightful one in every way. The river was sufficiently large to enable their crude, water-logged packet to make the numerous curves and bends with little or no assistance, both bow and stern being rigged with huge rudders, roughly hewn, that part touching the water being flat, similar to an oar. The silent, four-oared sailer glided along with the current, for five days and nights, when it was finally landed at a desolate locality hundreds of miles from the starting point.

"Here the craft was abandoned and the start was made into the interior. A three days' tramp, devoid of prominent incidents, brought them face to face with the foe they expected but one that feared, and gave them alarm. All along their route an occasional red man was to be seen, indicating their existence everywhere, but up to this time they had given them no trouble, and yet everybody kept a sharp lookout for the red devils as they progressed.

"I have read and heard so many descriptions of the awful scenes that followed the attack of a band of these wild men upon our grand old pioneers that even now the thought of that dreadful event chills my blood. It was a bloody battle, and flint rocks filled the air like a prolonged shower of hailstones. Our people escaped with small loss of life; but though confined to a half dozen, think of the woe and sorrow it occasioned in that camp.

"Although completely routed, the Indians renewed

the attack the following day, being reinforced. Our people expected another conflict and had made their preparations accordingly. In the meantime, however, a cave was found in the vicinity, near the banks of the stream which they were following, and they were making for this retreat with all possible haste when they were attacked the second time. Quickly organizing a plan of action and defense a squad of our people was given charge of the women and children, who, with the loaded sleds, pushed towards the cave which was reached in safety.

"Our fighting forces were doing heroic work, and kept the enemy at bay with their flint rifles and their dash and courage, having learned the day before the weakness of the redskins. But they were overpowered at last, and recognizing the result of a hand-to-hand combat, our brave old heroes had to retreat.

"This unexpected maneuver gave the Indian warriors fresh courage and it was a race of life or death for the Appalachians, who ran towards the cave with the velocity of the wind. On came the howling Chatterois, yelling and brandishing their weapons of warfare. It was a struggle, but they gained the victory. If was not an affair of honor, and a retreat under the circumstances was praiseworthy.

"The skirmish lasted perhaps three hours, and when the little Appalachian army reached the sweet laven of safety, the advance guard with all their effects, were safely housed in the mammoth cavern, where the frightened women and children had penetrated far into the gloomy expanse until they reached an open chamber.

They had scarcely entered this roomy apartment when the horrible yells of the native wild men reached them, which nearly frightened them into insensibility, expecting every moment that the next would be their last.

"A detachment of the Appalachian braves finally reached the inner chamber, and bade them push on. On they went, as best they could in the darkness, when suddenly a ray of light lit up the scene. Some one succeeding in igniting a pine torch, giving the frightened people a glimpse of the wonderful spectacle in that vast underground world. The guide, with torch in hand, sped on, closely followed by those behind, passing from one cavern to another, avoiding the dangerous places through gloomy expanse and numerous small chambers, until he came to a very small opening, when he was at a loss whether to attempt an entrance.

"Those behind who were battling with the invading Indians, were again forced to retreat, and took refuge in the darkness of the cave, and with a guide, soon caught up with the leaders. Hearing the piercing yells of the enemy, and knowing they were in close pursuit, they plunged through the narrow fissure, and when the last person passed in, the opening was closed against the mad fiends by filling it with rock and dirt. Feeling secure for the time being, they stopped to rest and appease their hunger.

"I fear this recital is becoming tiresome," said the Queen, at this point in the unwritten history she was slowly narrating to her interested audience of two.

"Tiresome!" repeated Brownlee, "it is the most fascinating recital I have ever heard."

"My sentiments exactly," said Paul, "what a wonderful memory."

"In the light of recent events my present faculties in that direction, no doubt strikes you with amazement. It does seem remarkable," said she, "but my tale is but half told."

"There are a number of points about which I would ask further information, but I will reserve them for the end—yes, Queen Olivet, we await the pleasure and further account of the trials, and tribulations, and the thrilling adventures of the brave and noble Appalachians," said Brownlee.

Resuming the historic romance the Appalachian Queen gave her listeners a detailed account of the experiences of the early founders of her country, graphically describing the difficulties encountered, gigantic in proportions, which at times seemed unsurmountable. Death and famine were overcome in a miraculous manner. She told of their trials and burdens as they groped their way through narrow fissures and gloomy sub-caverns for days and days until at last they entered the larger and mightier chambers which increased in magnitude as they proceeded, but with a full knowledge of the fact that they were forever shut out from the old world by walls, impenetrable, and as thick as the mountains.

"Passing out through a series of magnificent chambers they soon found themselves in more comfortable quarters," she continued speaking of their triumphant exit from the more compact caverns.

"These stupendous rooms were full of interest to

the artistic eye, beautiful stalactites like huge icicles, hung from the ceiling, making columns of hanging pendants of different shapes, that gave the apartment a brilliant appearance when illuminated by the torch light, especially magnificent are the numerous grottoes with their range of statuary, their columns of stalactites, their groves of corals and caves and figures, and their grand auditorium roofs,—no curio hall of ancient nor modern times can equal them in grandeur, enchantment, or architectural beauty."

The Queen was evidently in love with the beauties of her country and she took advantage of the occasion to elaborate upon the beauties and splendor of the passing show with becoming enthusiasm.

Concerning the *personnel* of the original founders of Appalachia, the Queen was equally flattering, and among them were artisans, mechanics, skilled workmen, inventors, professional men—representatives of every trade and profession—who made the kingdom of Appalachia, the most progressive in all the world, a statement that appears incomprehensible when the conditions of the country are taken into account.

This band of pioneers, so the Queen told our two friends, pushed on into the bowels of that mammoth cavern, until they reached an open space when a soft, mellow light, like the breaking of a spring dawn, began radiating through the vast expanse of that underground world. In time it grew brighter, and brighter, until the amazed little colony stood in rays as bright and glorious as the noonday sun, which in their despair, they had given up all hopes of ever again behold-

ing. What the light was they were at a loss to know, and the more devout were inclined to see in it the interposition of the Divine Hand.

But those of a scientific bent and education, viewed it as a natural phenomenon, subject to investigation and explanation. As the timepieces of the gentlemen indicated the passing of the day, the light began to fade, until darkness reigned supreme, and the wandering hosts, lost in the mysterious vale, retired to rest and to dream of an enchanted land.

"They awoke the following morning," continued the speaker, "to find the mist disappearing before the approaching illumination. They found that the light, which proceeded from the roof overhead, at an immense height, was brilliant and blindly dazzling in some places, while at others it presented the appearance of a sheet of softer radiance, and that its coming and going corresponded to the rising and setting of the sun.

"The wise men of the colony began at once seeking a solution of the phenomenon, and it was not long before they discovered that this vast underground world was a natural storehouse of earth's electricity, which swept around the outer crust of the earth, held motionless by the attraction of the sun, while the earth sped on in never ceasing revolutions. Here at the roof, covering a magnificent land, the metals, offering a counter attraction, impeded and obstructed the passage of the electrical current, and the intense vibrations thus caused, produced the light, which was inferior only to the great illuminator of the universe.

"Appalachia's grand old roof presents a natural

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sky to those accustomed to it, as it appears in the glorious radiance of our perfect sun. And its height when viewed at the capital and for miles and miles in every direction, seems infinite. Here we now have a magnificent country, traversed with the greatest system of railway known to the scientific world, besides other improvements that are unequalled."

Coming down to more recent events and history, Queen Olivet explained the laws and government of her kingdom which are alike novel and interesting. The Queen is the supreme ruler of Appalachia and has sovereign authority over the entire kingdom—absolute power—and holds her office during life. The death of a queen creates a vacancy which is filled by an election, submitted to the people, who elect by popular vote.

Queen Olivet had just succeeded to the throne, having been elected by a small majority over her competitor, Mademoiselle Angelina, and the rivalry between the two young ladies for this most exalted and crowning station was the key to the mystery that had puzzled the brain of Brownlee and Thornton the past few days.

The Queen presented a glowing description of the scene at the royal palace when she was crowned. Continuing the narration in which the reader is especially interested, she said:

"Down at Hell's Gate, the jumping off point in the river where the water tumbles into unknown regions in earth and darkness, are the beautiful waterfalls which are called the rapids, resembling in miniature your Niagara, as shown in the picture gallery. Your

Chattarai Shoals, Mr. Thornton, are our rapids in abbreviated form. At certain seasons of the year, which corresponds with your winter and summer, when the river is high, a visit to the rapids is a great treat. The raging stream with its oceans of water, rushes over those falls with such force that it presents a scene that is as inspiring as it is enchanting.

“ During the height of the inaugural ceremonies at the palace, occurred the usual summer tide and I was arranging for an excursion to the rapids as a part of the festivities of the week. Angelina, my late rival for queenly honors, feigned illness throughout the festal week, thus absenting herself from the social functions as well as the public rites, incidental to the coronation. But on this excursion, the closing number of the program, I sent her a special invitation, refusing to accept apologies or excuses, and she became my special or honored guest. We arrived at the rapids about one o’clock, a thousand strong, and it was a gay and happy throng. Sight-seeing was the principal diversion and the high banks were lined with an admiring and enthusiastic assembly. Angelina was especially entertaining and apparently anxious to make the holiday one of pleasure for me, and when she suggested a promenade I accepted without hesitation.

“ ‘ There is a charming spot further up the river, Queen Olivet,’ she said, ‘ which I discovered the last time I was here, where the view is splendid. Come with me.’

“ ‘ With pleasure,’ I assured her, and followed my guide, chattering gaily as we went.

"Directly we arrived at the designated point, we saw a high precipice overlooking the rushing water fully two hundred feet below.

"We advanced close to the edge of the overhanging cliff so as to get a full view of the magnificent scene, when I lost my balance and grasped Angelina's arm. She shook me off, and the next instant I was whirling through space into the mad waters below.

"In Appalachia we have swimming pools," she explained, "and fortunately I had learned the art of swimming, and was an expert, but I struck the water with such force that my limbs were devoid of strength and I shot into the current like an imprisoned bird set at liberty. I was stunned. I could scarcely realize my impending fate, yet I kept my head above water. To the on-looker I was ostensibly trying to beat the drift-wood over the falls into Hell's Gate. Soon I was shooting the rapids, plunging over cataracts, one after another, with no possible escape from the death that awaited me. On and on I went, dashing madly through the seething, foam-capped waters, that hissed and buzzed as if in mockery of my pitiful cries for help. The plashing of the waves and the awful hum resulting therefrom, was maddening. Huge pieces of timber would plunge through the water towards the bottom, as though full of animal life, while here and there, and all around me these same diving limbs were shooting up out of the water as if fleeing from danger. Through all this deluge and danger I quickly passed and with equal velocity was forced into the spiral whirlpool, which the mighty rushing waters create in

its volcanic, scramble to enter Hell's Gate, the narrow fissure leading into untraversed and unknown regions.

"Into the serpentine pool I plunged, when I found myself lying on a wave which revolved with lightning velocity, like a whirligig driven by a steam engine and I became so dizzy my head was gyrating in the same manner, blinding my mental faculties. And yet I knew I was slowly going down, and a moment later I dropped into a circular-shaped opening like a rocket and glided out in the roaring current. If possible the current was swifter here than at the rapids, and I fairly flew, arriving in a very short time in what I took to be a large, roomy expanse. Here I once more had a few lessons in serpentine movements, a spin like a top, but with less velocity. In making one of a dozen or more revolutions, when I was worn out both in body and mind, my hand caught hold of a rock, which I held onto with a death-like grip, and as soon as my strength would permit I climbed out of the water onto a ledge of rock and sat down.

"'Thank God,' I cried with all the power I possessed. There I sat and cried, and prayed until I was almost delirious. I was chilled through, my body was tired and bruised, my heart was lacerated, my mind was decaying and I was ready to give up in despair. To stay there in that horrible darkness was slow death —to go on with the stream was further pain and certain death. My brain was on fire and my head was still making those awful revolutions. I cried out in my extremity, and the echo was maddening. I prayed unceasingly, but I felt that even God had deserted me.

I tore my hair and bit my hands in my frenzy, until at last my strength entirely deserted me and in my weakness I realized that a deathly sleep was taking possession of me. How long I lay there I know not, but falling into the water partially aroused me from the stupor and I offered no resistance, but unconsciously keeping afloat, until I reached the opening that carried the stream into further darkness and oblivion, grasping the rocks overhead my feet swept under, and I once more uttered a silent prayer, and with a final farewell to home and friends, my hands slowly loosened their hold. I gave myself to God and was ready to cross over the great river of peace into eternity."

She could no longer keep back the tears and they now poured down her cheeks like rain. Brownlee and Thornton were both visibly affected, and they, too, were unable to suppress their weeping.

"Your prayers were answered, sweetheart," said Paul feelingly, breaking the sacred silence, "while you were in dire distress you turned to God, and in the midst of your unprecedented calamity your appeals reached me as I stood on the mountain top directly over you. In my progress towards the river I became lost, as it were, and sat down. The wild animal that stirred me into activity was God's work, which not only hastened me on but sent me on the right road, that led to you. The same guiding hand will return you to your Appalachian home and reinstate you in the palace, that is now no doubt occupied by an usurper."

"Truly spoken," said Brownlee. "Your experi-

ences, Queen, are not only unprecedented, but have no parallel in history, and no chapter of romance ever pictured a more thrilling, soul-stirring adventure. The most fascinating pages of fiction do not compare with your narrative."

"Of course you have no idea of the distance from this last pool to the point where you were rescued?" asked Paul.

"No, I haven't the slightest idea; when my hands lost their hold I likewise relinquished the last spark of hope, and my mind was a blank until restored to sweet consciousness in your presence. I do not even remember the cry of distress that first attracted your attention and awoke you from your afternoon nap, Mr. Thornton."

"Pardon the rambling thought, Queen, but what was the motive or inducement of the Appalachian pioneers to explore that cavern; in other words why did they not retrace their steps and abandon the cave at the outset?" asked Brownlee.

"They fully intended to do so, but delayed the attempt through fear of their enemies, and in moving their camp in the vicinity of running water, which was found next day, they lost track of the closed fissure through which they escaped; and were never able to find it again. In the blockade against the Indians was the crowning stroke in the final separation from the world—the taking the veil, as it were," she explained.

"Thank you," said Brownlee, "that clears the atmosphere in the vicinity of the Kentucky Mammoth Cave, but about this other outlet. This stream that in-

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vited your perilous adventure—what is the depth of the water at Hell's Gate say at this time of year?"

"It is all guess work, Mr. Brownlee, but judging from the river above the rapids, I would venture to say it is very shallow. The stream from its ingress to Hell's Gate passes through a deep canon, walled on either side with solid stone, forming continuous parallel cliffs the entire distance, presenting a yawning gulf that is inaccessible and unapproachable, at times the bed of the river is nearly dry."

"Then I gather that all that portion of the cave beyond the river, or canon, is yet unexplored."

"Your reasonings are correct," she replied, "plans for bridging the chasm have been submitted, however, and it is only a question of time when we will be in touch with the unsifted and heretofore neglected section of the Appalachias."

"You have churches and schools, of course?"

"In abundance. Our schools are the pride of the people, and our churches are prosperous institutions. We manufacture our goods, and factories and shops are in evidence everywhere, but," she added, laughing, "our exports always equal the imports."

"What about the circulating medium of the Appalachia?"

"Our money consists of gold, silver and copper, regulated by the standard of the forefathers. We have our own smelters and mints."

"And mines?"

"And rich gold, silver and copper mines abound everywhere. Precious metals are our cheapest com-

modities and the per capita circulation runs into millions."

"You take my breath away!"

"These diamonds you so greatly admired," added the Queen, "are the product of Appalachia."

"I haven't another word to say, your highness."

"I am ready to start for Appalachia, sweetheart, and I go to procure tickets for the Chattaroi. Shall I include one for you, Brownlee," said Paul.

"Give me an hour to think over it, Thornton."

"Go with us, Mr. Brownlee," pleaded the Queen.

"The road to Appalachia, my dear madam, is no bed of roses, and while I would be willing to face the certain and unavoidable difficulties in order to aid you and to look at your fair land with its wealth of minerals, and grandeur, I hesitate to leave my work here, knowing our mutual friend, Mr. Thornton, will lead you thither in triumph, with victory and conquest as his colours. No, my mission is here—his commission sends him there," spoke Brownlee with much feeling.

Further conversation was interrupted by the clang-ing signal from the dining hall, and the two gentle-men hastened to their rooms to prepare for their noon-day meal.

CHAPTER XVIII

ON TO APPALACHIA

"HELLO, Thornton, and the sister, too, well I'm right glad to see you-ens ag'in. How're yer anyhow?"

"We're all right, Uncle, only a little tired, that's all."

"I knowed, I knowed you the fust time I clapped my eyes on yer. Cum up to the cabin, folks, and rest a spell."

Young Thornton and the Queen had just left their canoe, having made the trip from Virginia in exactly ten days, which included a short stop at Princeton.

"The river is not as 'high' as it was the last time we were here, eh, Uncle?"

"Oh, No! It wuz on a reg'lar tear tother time. It's nearly dried up now, but the fishen's good in sum places. Thought you-ens gone home long time ago."

"Oh, we had to come back, Uncle. You see, she lost some valuables on account of the high water, and we came, here, hoping the river had receded so that we could find some trace of them."

"That so? Lost 'em in the river? Why, Thornton, the bed of the stream is sand. You'll never find 'em. Howsumever, I 'low they're worth look'n fer. Jist as

well take off your duds miss, kase, you-ens 'll have to stay a spell waiten on the river to dry up."

"About how long, Uncle?" inquired she.

"I reckon a week—maybe more'n a week—depens on the wether, an' it looks like rain now."

"It doesn't matter, Uncle, we are here to stay until the river bottom comes to the surface. Can we arrange for board and lodging?"

"Well, I reckon! You-ens ken stay here jist as long as ye want ter fer all I car'. I've got ter go ter town, Thornton, but my gun, hangs over the door and ye'll find the powder and bullets a plenty. I reckon you ken cotch nuf game ter s'ply the table."

"How long will you be gone, Uncle?" asked Paul, after thanking him for his hospitality.

"Lemme see, oh, 'bout five days I 'low—owen to chances."

"Want the canoe?"

"I don't mind if I do use the push boat, Thornton, I'll take petickler pains with it."

"Don't mention it, don't mention it, Uncle, we may never want—to leave here," catching himself, "by the time you get back."

"I 'low you-ens du take to the country. Jist like yer old dad. How is Dave? gittin rich, I reckon."

"My father was quite well, Uncle, the last time I heard from him."

"That's so, you ain't seed him. Shore nuf. Well, I must be goin'. You-ens 'll find corn meal and baken; and thares a jug of sorgum over'n the corner. Make yerselves to home. I'll be back jist as soon as I kin."

"Isn't he a kind-hearted old soul?" said the Queen.

"Oh, yes, he's a typical mountaineer," replied Paul. "I am going down to the river, sweetheart; want to go along?"

"Wait till I get my hat," was her reply.

It was watching and waiting with Paul and the Queen for the next week. For hours at a time they would sit on the sunny banks of the rapidly receding stream watching the ebb and flow and at the close of each day they marked the gradual decline of the water and noted each morning the advancing sand bar as it slowly reared its head from its watery environment. They never tired nor uttered a word of complaint, but on the other hand were happy and confident.

They had carefully explored the banks of the river in the neighborhood and had located a little gulf where the water rippled and swelled and bubbled as though fed by an artesian well. Further investigations revealed the fact that concealed about eight inches below the water surface was an opening under a ledge of rocks, from which the water flowed freely, as from a drain pipe or sewer.

On the third morning this natural aqueduct was prominently outlined and the interested couple clapped their hands in glee, fully believing that here was the gateway leading to the coveted regions of the underground world. This discovery increased their hopes of an early entrance into the cavern and they reluctantly quitted the place when the darkness fell upon them. They were up at the first dawn of the following

day and covered the distance between the cabin and their objective point in a very short time.

"Praise the Lord!" yelled Thornton, who had reached the spot ahead of the Queen, "see, sweetheart, the water has almost disappeared, and the cave is a living certainty, Hallelujah."

"It is too good to be true," said she, glancing from the muddy cavern-gate toward Thornton, with tears in her eyes; tears of joy and gladness.

"Nothing is too good, sweetheart. To-morrow we will be able to penetrate the darkness of old Mother Earth."

They were unusually lively and gay, and their daily outing for a squirrel or a bird was cut short on this gladsome day. They had no appetite and all their thoughts were bent on the recent revelations and what the next few days would bring forth.

The excitement incident to the occasion had driven from Thornton's mind the disagreeable features of his stop at Princeton enroute. While he was inclined to laugh over the "scandal" which had shaken the old town from "hell to breakfast," as one of his country cousins expressed it, the thought that his friends were so easily deceived and that he and Miss Arnold were under a cloud, that the shocking affair had sent her out of town, perhaps with a heart bleeding with sorrow and distress; these thoughts had frequently flashed through his mind the past few days, and they were hard to shake off.

"The idea of Paul Thornton living a dual life," exclaimed Paul in one of his wandering moods, "my

friends must be crazy! Poor Henry, he was honest in his convictions. Any one would have sworn she was the Queen. It is strange, though," he admitted, "that Mrs. Overton offered no satisfactory explanation. I am at a loss to understand her silence and their hasty flight. Perhaps the affair was more serious than it appeared to me. My father, too; it worries him not a little. He spoke of the heavy shrinkage in business as though I was responsible for it. I hope nothing serious will result from it. Pshaw! why do such vagaries haunt my mind? Still, come to think of it, the bank people were not so gushing as usual and they granted the loan of a paltry five hundred with evident deliberation. Our financial affairs were surely in good shape. Yes, as to that I am certain. It was the 'scandal.' Oh, well, that will blow over. But will it? Some of my closest friends tried to give me the cold shoulder, I was importuned to explain, but how could I? Ought I to have given them the secret of the Queen, that was a sacred one to me? It was out of the question. Even my mother urged me to quiet the feelings of my neighbors; that it was important. But no, I only laughed at her while she wept. She would not acknowledge that Miss Arnold and the Queen were two distinct persons. She doubted her own eyes and showed a lack of faith in my vague explanation. Yes it was rather hypothetical, that's a fact."

Early on the morning of the fifth day young Thornton went down to the river alone. And to his surprise found the opening nearly dry, and with the aid of a shovel and spade, had no difficulty in entering the

mouth of the cave. It was very narrow, but by crawling on his hands and knees he succeeded in passing through the opening, and discovered that the passage enlarged as he progressed until he reached a hollow chamber, where the height was almost sufficient to allow him to stand upright. He paused and a tremor shook him. He was convinced of the truth, and hurriedly retraced his steps, running to the cabin and advising the Queen of his wonderful adventures and discovery.

"Let us hasten our investigations and, if possible, make our escape before the return of our host," said Thornton, flushed with excitement and talking rapidly,

"The suggestion is a good one," replied the Queen, glancing at his mud-covered garments, "and I will prepare for the journey at once."

Paul made his exit, and anxiously awaited the signal for his return.

An unexpected surprise awaited them at the river in their haste to bid adieu to their present surroundings in the person of their hospitable friend.

"Waal, I'll be dum-frizzled! Thornton, ye look like a mud duck, sure and sartin. What on 'arth ye been a doin' to yer fine close?"

"I got into the mud, this morning," began Thornton, stammering, "I thought I was on the track of the lost treasures."

"You-ens haint give up yit—kind o' think o' findin' yez gon, till I seed yez comin' down on a dog trot. Say Thornton I seed you-ens sister over to town, leastwise she didn't d'ny it, but she's jist the picture of that ar' gal," motioining towards the Queen.

"Is that so?" said Paul, the vision of Miss Arnold looming up in his mind, "was she alone, Uncle?"

"Waal now, I didn't ax her, when I fust seed her—thinks I, that's Thornton's sister and how'd she beat me ter town, and so I jist yanked myself right over to her, jist so and spoke to her. Says I, 'ain't yer Dave Thornton's gal,' an' she turned as red in the face as a beet and laughed."

"What did she have to say?" asked Paul.

"Sed as how she wuz on the hunt of you-ens, an' I 'low she wuz tickled plum to deth when I told her you-ens wuz astayen to my house as happy an' frolickin-like as yearlin' calves. I reckon you-ens be gon' more'n yer 'lowed, an' yer folks wuz oneeasy-like."

"What became of her, Uncle? Was she returning home?"

"Likely as not. Unbenoenst to me she made herself scace an' I dun forgot about her. Down thar in the narrows be a man an' a gal on a couple of critters, an' the gal 'peared mighty nigh like her, Thornton, but my eyes aint as shore as they unst wuz, I reckon. Case they orter to bin here by now."

"I hardly think it was my sister, Uncle. Come along, sweetheart, let's away to the sandbar," spoke Paul in a careless manner and away they went, leaving Uncle Bill alone on the river bank.

"As full of life as a kitten," said he, looking after the couple. "I reckon she *is* his sister, tho', but—but they 'pear to think a gol darn site uv each other," was his comment, going up the hill.

CHAPTER XIX

FROM VIRGINIA TO AND THROUGH HELL'S GATE

Two hours after the conversation just narrated, Paul struck a wafer, and his companion quickly recognized the chamber into which they had just entered from the long-distanced passage, as being the identical room where she had spent hours of agony and horror a few weeks ago. It presented a damp, gloomy appearance, and having no particular attraction for them, our friends pushed on. At numerous places, the water was quite deep, warning of an approaching fissure, so they made their way slowly. At times it was difficult to proceed in the darkness, and the wet pine torch refused to ignite. Progress was impeded, but the indomitable will and energy of our friends carried them along, over obstacles that at times seemed insurmountable.

They expected difficulties, and while they were not prepared to do the impossible, they were really surprised at their progress, and tramped on with light hearts, pleasantly exchanging views and expressions on the various objects, and thoughts that encompassed their surroundings and minds.

Passing through a series of smaller caverns they came to a high ledge of rocks, over which the sparkling waters rippled with enchanting beauty. The melody

of the gurgling, tinkling water as it bounded over the moss-covered rocks was like a faint echo of a grand anthem from an invisible choir. They were both enchanted and paused with bated breath, uttering inaudible murmurs of admiration.

But time was precious and even the gentle lullaby of the poetic streamlet was powerless to attract our friends for any great length of time. Old Father Time had so worn the rocks that the ascent was practically the climbing of a rickety stairway, and it was but the work of a few moments when Paul and the Queen were invading the darkness beyond the waterfall, where new scenes awaited them.

They were now entering the larger caverns that held innumerable attractions that at other times they would no doubt have admired for their splendor and magnificence, but they stopped not. The attractive features of the great underground cavern for them was further on. Pushing on, following the zig-zag route of the winding stream, they finally emerged from a gloomy expanse to a vast amphitheater that reminded Paul of the Queen's description of the wonderful magnificence of the Mammoth Cave. Here, too, the apartment was lighted and investigation proved that they were nearing Hell's Gate.

This discovery, gave them fresh hope and renewed energy. Their speed increased unconsciously, and it was but a short time before they passed Hell's Gate.

Long before reaching the mainland Paul detected an unnatural atmosphere, that at first was suffocating, and which increased in oppressiveness as they advanced.

Glancing at the Queen from time to time to see how it affected her, he was surprised, for her cheeks were rosy, her eyes bright and her face radiant with happiness. Paul said nothing. Words were out of place. Looking at the happy woman by his side he could not disturb her joyful thoughts by empty words. Once she looked into his face with a gratified smile, which instantly changed to sadness.

“ You look ill, Mr. Thornton, we have been too hasty. Let us pause for a moment’s rest,” she said, stopping.

Paul was glad of an opportunity to sit down and dropped at her feet as weak as a kitten.

“ I am weak,” he replied, simply.

“ Your head is hot. You are suffering, and there is nothing within reach to aid you. Oh, for strength to complete our journey,” she moaned in her anguish.

“ My charming sweetheart,” said Paul, quickly jumping to his feet and shaking off the oppression, “ I had almost forgotten that there is nothing to tire—to oppress. I thank you for reminding me of the nothingness of such things. I am no longer weak. I was dreaming, let’s away,” and she clapped her hands at the change in his appearance.

The atmosphere continued heavy, but it gave him no further trouble, and at last they reached the Appalachian sunlight, when the Queen dropped on her hands and knees and reverently kissed the ground.

“ Thank God!” she murmured.

Paul stood by in the silence, his head uncovered, watching the movements of his companion, whose cup was full and running over with happiness.

Presently she raised her head, and, gaining her feet, rushed over to Paul. Tears of joy trickled down her angelic face, and placing her arms around his neck, her head resting on his manly breast, she wept like a child.

"How can I ever repay you?" she sobbed.

"Don't speak of it," cried Paul, visibly affected, "come sweetheart, cheer up. I am repaid a thousand times at witnessing your happiness and joy at this moment. We have not had a bad time of it. I would not have missed this adventure for worlds. My only regret is in the thought that in a short time we will have to part, perhaps for ever."

"Oh, do not say that! I had never thought of the parting!" she sobbed. "Promise me not to leave me", unfolding her arms and dropping at his feet. "Here on my bended knees I ask you to promise."

"Sweetheart," said Paul, calmly, raising her up, and looking into her eyes still wet with tears, "you forget that I have friends in the other world."

"Yes, yes, forgive me—I was selfish. But you will surely promise to stay for a little while, and—and—Mr. Thornton, you will accept——"

"Say no more, sweetheart, I am not going to run away from you, nor will I leave Appalachia for a time. I do not forget our experiences to-day, nor will the memory of other pleasant days spent together fade away. I realize that constant association and intimacy have made us life-long friends and I repeat that my only regret lies in the parting."

"I pray that time will never come, and you know, my dearest of friends, I could not wish you harm."

"I honor you, and respect your every thought. But we are losing sight of the fact that, although we overcame gigantic obstacles in our progress thus far and that we are at the threshold of the goal, there is yet one more bridge to cross, one more chasm to leap, one more impediment to conquer."

"The walls! the walls! I had forgotten them."

"And we have a herculean task before us. Have you any idea of the distance to the city?"

"The journey is as nothing once we are out of the canons, but to climb those cliffs—what are we to do?" she cried, wringing her hands.

"Where there is a will there is always a way," said Paul, trying to speak cheerfully, knowing the occasion required it.

While Paul's words and his careless manner encouraged her, the Queen realized that she was better informed than he concerning their present situation, and she listened to his sanguine exclamations and noted his calmness with a degree of doubt and misgiving. She knew that several attempts to reach the river had been abandoned as impossible undertakings, and yet his apparent cheerfulness was reassuring.

"Come, sweetheart, let us make our way. Surely there is some way of escape from this veritable prison."

"While there is life, there is hope," quoth she, as if to remind him of his former homily, "but to look at those cliffs, with the knowledge that they grow in height as you advance, the prospects are not as bright as they might be, and it takes courage to even retain hope."

Paul bade her be of good cheer while he made a tour of investigation. She watched his movements with interest, and as he was making a careful examination she supposed he held the delusive idea that he might be able to scale the walls, if he entertained such a thing, he quickly abandoned it, for he came back presently, with worry written on his face.

"Regular Chinese walls!" he exclaimed. "From their appearance one would imagine they were built by expert workmen, and time has made but a faint impression upon them. I must confess, sweetheart, that the outlook is anything but encouraging. I hardly know what to suggest. Possibly we might find the limb of an overhanging tree."

"Not one" she interrupted. "There is not a tree within a hundred feet of the edge of the cliff, owing to the width of the rocky surface."

"Is it possible to attract attention from your people? They could lower a rope—"

"No, no, no, Mr. Thornton, you are in ignorance of the real facts. To guard against danger of falling over the cliffs, a high iron fence runs parallel with the cliff the entire distance and is built some thirty or forty yards from the edge. Every avenue of escape is closed against us," she moaned. "Even the gates are barred and securely fastened. No! we are doomed to die in sight of home and friends," she sobbed as though her heart was breaking.

"Do not give up so easily, sweetheart," taking her soft hands in his. "There is one consolation left us, if worst comes to worst we can at least go back."

"Don't say that!" she cried. "Forgive me Mr. Thornton. Besides, I do not feel equal to another tramp through that long, dismal hole. This imprisonment drives me mad. Oh! if Mr. Brownlee was only here. He would find a way out of our helpless condition."

Paul's face flushed hotly, not from anger, nor were his crimson blushes tokens of jealousy, but her words cut him.

The Queen was gazing with tear-stained eyes towards the ground and she saw nothing of the changes on the face of her companion. The silence that at other times would have been painful, was as a balm in Gilead, and when it was broken, the Queen looked into a face, entirely devoid of worry and care, and in place of grief she saw nothing but expressions of peace and hopefulness that sent her thoughts flying towards the spot where she first turned her eyes upon that beaming face when she cried out, "Is this Heaven?"

Now, as then, a beautiful smile lit up his countenance, and she could read therein words of such comfort that the sorrows and miseries of the past were forgotten.

With her hand still in his, he jumped to his feet. She felt the vibrations, the current of which stirred her into activity, and without waiting for the command, imitated his movements, and allowed him to lead her toward the dead wall in silence.

Arriving at the foot of the almost perpendicular wall, Paul touched a stone just above his head. It moved forward about eighteen inches as though pushed out

from behind. In the twinkling of an eye he was standing on the projecting rock and grasping the Queen's hands quickly lifted her to his side. Reaching out towards the right he touched another stone which responded to his silent command with the same ease and they stood on the second round of the ladder. Another and another and the performance was repeated over and over again with the same result until they reached the top in triumph.

The Queen's astonishment over the marvellous demonstrations was stilled into silence by the calm, inspired face and manner of her companion, but when she reached the summit, she turned her head and glanced back over the route traversed, when she discovered a complete stairway. Peering down towards the rapids from the dizzy height, brought back to her mind the memory of another vision and the fatalities resulting therefrom, and she would have made a second plunge had it not been for the presence of her faithful companion, who noticed the fainting weakness and her perilous position in time to save her from instant death.

Paul picked her up as he would a child and carried her towards the iron fence and finding a gate, pushed it open and placed her on the grass just inside of the enclosure.

If he had returned an hour later he would have been surprised to see another human form slowly making her way up that marvellous stairway.

CHAPTER XX

A GARDEN OF EDEN

THE Queen had scarcely touched the ground when consciousness returned and she sat up, instantly, recognizing her fair land.

“Pardon my weakness, Mr. Thornton,” she said rising, “and let me hasten to bid you welcome to my dear old Appalachia.”

Paul tried to make a suitable reply; he murmured something, but he had just caught sight of his surroundings and he was so filled with surprise and admiration that he was struck dumb.

It was a lightning change from a rough, rocky canon to a garden of Eden.

“Possibly there are more beautiful scenes, but I am ready to go on record that nowhere on earth does there exist a land so rich in loveliness,” exclaimed Paul. “Oh! Queen, why did you keep this from me? No wonder you longed to return to this enchanted land. Well do I remember how I pitied you when you manifested such a longing to return to what I supposed was a cold, barren cave.”

The Queen laughed and rejoiced over Paul’s surprise and enthusiasm, and her gladsome face was in keeping with the landscape.

"This is one of the proudest moments of my life. No, Mr. Thornton, I told you nothing of the beauties of Appalachia as touching her fields, meadows and gardens, her groves, orchards and vineyards, her forest of plants, shrubs and trees, her grasses, flowers and vines, and her beautiful avenues. I wanted to give you a genuine surprise."

"Well have you succeeded," replied he. "Our costumes seem out of place amidst all this grandeur. I feel like a tramp at a carnation show," looking at his soiled garments.

"I will arrange it. Trust to me. Await you here until my return," said she, running away.

Paul threw himself on the velvety carpet of green, watching the fleeting woman until she disappeared in the dense shrubbery. He then drank in the beauties of the scene, and his thoughts suddenly went back to the early morning. Once more he and the Queen were making their way through that lonesome underground cavern. Once more he was climbing that impromptu stairway, step by step, and finally reached the valley of grass and flowers. The atmosphere was thoroughly impregnated with a rich perfume, which fanned him to sleep, and to dream of the day's adventures.

When Paul awoke he was lying in a hammock, in the midst of a dense forest of peculiar trees, whose leaves were like palm-leaf fans. The Queen was bending over him with her face so close that he could feel her hot breath, and he awoke with the consciousness that her lips had touched his. She was faultlessly dressed and with the exception of the long cloak, her

appearance was very much like that of the young lady he had rescued from the river.

“Come with me,” she said after an informal greeting, and he followed her into the house. “Here in this apartment,” stopping at a door down the hallway, “you will find a change of clothing. If anything is lacking, call me,” she said.

He entered the room and closed the door. A gentleman saluted him with extravagant courtesy as he entered and took charge of him. Supposing he was a valet he made good use of him. His services were found indispensable before Paul’s toilet was complete. He hesitated to put on such an elaborate costume, thinking the Queen was overdoing the thing, but he finally submitted, being informed by the valet that it was the prevailing costume of Appalachia; and while in Appalachia he would be an Appalachian.

The Queen came running to meet him, as soon as he made his appearance on the veranda.

“Are you ready, my lord,” she asked, looking pleased.

Instead of a direct answer Paul took her arm and they walked towards the hammock.

“My dear Queen, let us discuss plans before executing them. Possibly you have outlined a policy that we are to pursue.”

“My plans are simple enough. We will go direct to my home in the outskirts of the city, and then to the palace,” said she.

“Home first, characteristic of your gentle, loving nature. Very well. Now I would ask if you think

it would be prudent to make yourself known to your parents suddenly. You tell me they are quite old. Your sudden appearance would give them a great surprise and I very much doubt the wisdom of such a move."

"Could you not precede me and prepare them for my coming?" asked she.

"This is my plan. Veil yourself and we will make them a visit, introducing ourselves as hailing from some outlying district of your country. This will gain an entrance and then we will govern ourselves according to the circumstances. Bear in mind this one fact, sweetheart; you are mourned as dead, and your place at the palace is no doubt held by another. I have no doubt but that the woman who pushed you over the cliffs is now the recognized Queen of Appalachia. Understand me, sweetheart, this is merely a supposition on my part, but we are not advised what has transpired since that memorable day."

"I see," she said, "your plans are mine, Mr. Thornton, but let us hasten, I am dying to see my mother and father." And thus agreed, they took their leave.

The house they just left was occupied by a wealthy family who were spending the day in the city, and the servants were in complete ignorance concerning matters of royalty, as the Queen learned by her first and only question.

Paul and the Queen wended their way through mountains of flowers, passing into a magnificent grass carpeted avenue, each side of which was terraced and banked with grass, studded with roses of every color

imaginable, that sparkled like diamonds, which led them into a larger, and, if possible, a more gorgeously decked avenue, one of the main thoroughfares, on each side were trees, the bodies of which were completely hidden by the great mass of hanging or climbing vines, and every vine a flower garden of itself.

“Now, my Lord, we will wait here for a through train,” said she, smiling, as they reached an exquisite retreat that had attracted his attention, being a novel, thatch-covered depot, tastily adorned with the colors of the country, and supplied with cozy seats that were inviting.

“A through train,” repeated Paul half aloud. He was not a little astonished, but he was gradually becoming accustomed to surprises, and expected them as a matter of course; but the idea of a through train in a cave was a novel one.

“Let us cross over to the opposite side,” she began, consulting her timepiece, and leading the way, “and I will explain one of our methods of transportation while waiting for the train.”

On reaching the point designated Paul was shown what he took to be a moving side-walk, about four feet in width.

“This is one of our first public improvements,” said she, adding, “bear in mind, my lord, that here in Appalachia you will find many inventions, the equal of your country, and possibly some in advance of it. This ancient mode of rapid transit was among the first and for that reason has never been abandoned in this section of the kingdom.”

"I think I understand its operation," spoke he, "we have a similar invention, used, principally, in parks and at the larger pleasure resorts."

The Queen glanced up quickly as if surprised, but said nothing.

"Why not get on board," he suggested, making a movement as if to carry out the idea.

"Stay!" she cried, grasping his arm, and arresting his progress, "would you kill yourself, my lord?"

Blushing in his confusion he made a more careful examination of the mechanical contrivance, when he was quickly convinced that his American plaything, the moving sidewalk was not in it with this rapidly moving train.

"Jerusalem!" said Paul, retreating. "How the deuce do you board the thing?"

"There is a two-minute stop every half hour," she explained. "Time is up now, and not a car in sight. Oh, here comes the next best thing!" she cried, joyfully.

The sidewalk gradually slowed up and presently came to a full stop, and almost immediately in front of them appeared a basket-shaped carriage, made for two persons, which they lost no time in entering, and two minutes later they were going up the avenue like the wind.

The basket car was built like an air ship and glided through the air at the rate of 200 miles an hour, making it impossible for Paul to gain any knowledge of the country through whch he was passing, and its first stop, after a thirty minutes ride, landed our two passengers

at a point, the surroundings and appearance of which were very similar to that described.

Here Paul and the Queen left their cozy car and descended to the verdant platform. They were now in sight of the city, and within a short distance of her home. She led the way, heavily veiled, across the avenue to the "central" station, where they met hundreds of people, rushing here and there as if in search of outgoing trains, resembling a depot scene in some American city. Pushing their way through the jostling crowd to the other side of the artistically thatched waiting room, the Queen paused as if in doubt when a knightly young man made his appearance.

"I want a suburban car west," she told him.

"This way, madam," replied the young man, leading them to a certain car, containing a number of empty seats, "Leaves in one minute!" he added, and hurried away. They were barely seated when it began moving, arriving near her home in a few moments.

This car, Paul observed, was medium-sized, in comparison with others at "Central" station. It had three wheels in the center, underneath the seats, which ran in a solitary groove, while overhead was a single center wheel, also running in a groove. The wheels were about a half-inch wide and not over twelve inches in circumference. It contained six cushioned-seated chairs and on the floor in front of each chair was a tiny little brake that could be operated by merely touching it when the car would start or stop instantly.

Arriving at the grounds in front of the picturesque

residence, so well known to Queen Olivet, they entered and started down the moss-lined walk that led up to the front entrance. Paul was struck with awe to notice on the door an emblem of death, and he paused on the threshold.

"It is for me," she whispered. "Have you a card?"

Every costume worn in Appalachia is provided with a pocket, in which is carried a card case, Paul was in ignorance of this custom and in answer to the request began fumbling in his pockets, American fashion.

"Never mind; I have it," she added, producing a card case, with a pencil attached.

"Write the names, Paul Andover and sister," she said extending a small piece of excellent card-board.

Complying with her request, Paul returned the card, which she placed in a slot on the facing of the door, and touched a button that was found immediately under it, when there was a faint echo of the chime of a bell and the card disappeared.

Presently the door swung open and they were admitted to an inner chamber, just off from the front hall, which Paul learned afterward was the reception room, a very pretty and tastily furnished apartment, with carved walls.

"My mother," she whispered to Paul at the first opportunity.

They were most kindly received, the father appearing presently shaking hands and otherwise extending cordial greetings.

"We came to pay our respects and to inquire for the latest tidings of our dear Queen," Paul ventured to say.

A sob from the mother as in reply, came pretty near proving disastrous to their plans; deception at such a crisis seeming out of place to the Queen, and she found it difficult to play her part.

"We have heard nothing from Ollie, but we still retain a hope," spoke her father.

"She will come back—I know she will," sobbed her mother. "They say she is dead, but somehow I can't believe it. No, I will not believe it. My girl Queen will return. It was a great honor to crown Ollie a queen, but no woman was better fitted to occupy the throne than she, but if they will give her back to us they can have the crown."

"My friends, you are right, Queen Olivet will come back to you. She is not dead. Take the crepe from the door and be of good cheer. We bring to you sweet consolation. She lives," spoke Paul, cheerfully.

"Yes, thank God!" murmured the Queen.

"Oh, sir!" cried the mother, gladness breaking through her sorrow, the father on his feet. "What is it you tell us? She lives, do you say? My sweet girl lives? Where is she. Speak!"

"Yes, she is alive and happy, rest assured of that," replied he. "We come to you for information. Tell us of the result of that memorable rapids excursion to Angelina. What was her explanation?"

"Her frightful screams attracted the attention of our people, who hastened to her side, where they found her apparently prostrated, wringing her hands and moaning in dreadful agony of mind," began the mother. "When she was quieted she told them of Oli-

vet's plunge into the awful river. The excitement following this horrible event was intense. The news of the tragedy soon reached the city and to every portion of the kingdom. People lined the cliff overlooking the falls, hoping to catch a glimpse of their Queen, but nothing came of it, and no one dared to venture into the canon, the general verdict being that our beloved girl was drowned."

"Yes, that was the universal verdict," added the venerable father, "but we held to the idea that she escaped, how, we did not pretend to explain. For a time, foul play was hinted at, and there yet remains a feeling of that character throughout the kingdom. This idea gained additional credence when Angelina's friends began proceedings to place her on the throne."

"And did they succeed?" asked Paul eagerly.

"Why, yes, did you not know that within three days after the accident a proclamation was issued and thirty days thereafter Angelina was elected and crowned queen?"

"Did she have opposition?"

"Yes, opposition, but no opponent. It seems strange you know nothing of the affair," looking at him with suspicion.

"I want to beg your pardon, father," spoke Paul, "I neglected to tell you that I have not been in the Appalachian kingdom since the accident."

"But for him," added Olivet, removing her veil, "your Ollie would not be enjoying life. Don't you know me, mother!"

CHAPTER XXI

PAUL UNCHAINING THE TRUTH

“I FULLY approve of your plans, Mr. Thornton,” said the aged father that evening, “and I will cheerfully enter into any arrangement you suggest. While I am wholly ignorant of your teachings, I am willing to learn. From what our daughter tells us you have miraculous power.”

“Thornton the man has no power, but Thornton the I Am has power unlimited,” he interrupted.

“I understand,” said he. “Now as to the reproducing of their old queen at a favorable time, such as you suggest, I believe your plans are the best that can be devised.”

“Then we will begin work at once. In the meantime it is important that your daughter be kept out of sight.”

“I will see to that. Now, Mr. Thornton, are you sure you fully understand the characteristics of our people, and did you get a satisfactory description of the city and its environments from my brief explanation?”

“Perfectly. I will leave you on the morrow, and for a time I and your household are strangers.

"I understand," replied the father. "This is a happy day for us, Mr. Thornton, and we all worship you."

"Let me interrupt you, father, I do not believe in worshipping anyone, and above all I do not want to be an idol. I did nothing worth mentioning as a mortal man."

"Yes, yes," said he, "strange, strange, I am really anxious to know more of your doctrines."

"I am glad you are interested. There is only God, and beside him there is no other. God is all power as well as all space, hence there is no room for a devil. God made all things and said they were good, so if there is sin, sickness or death they must be good. God is love. Do you think for a moment that he made men and women and children and placed them here to suffer? God is power. If he is infinite then he dwells within me and I am, and the recognition of this truth is all that is required to do those things that are necessary for our good."

"But you admit the presence of sin and sickness?"

"There is no sin or sickness as you would know if you were born of the spirit. You told me an hour ago you were suffering with a 'raging' headache, your mortal mind was the recipient of a telegram announcing the coming of headache, and you had confidence in the message, and fully believed the 'raging' ache was headed your way. Mortal thought hastened it on but it was a fake, I told you it was a delusion and a snare—that one could likewise bring about all the ills to which mortal bodies are heir by nonsensical thoughts. And that you had merely to deny the existence of such buga-

boos in the true way, the only way, when it would hide itself and wither away into the nothingness that it is. I gave you ample proof of this, and demonstrated to you that all things are possible, with God, and your 'raging' ache took a *header* into oblivion."

"I frankly acknowledge the truth in all you say, but how is one to be so divinely constituted as to believe in the nothingness and myth of a severe pain?" he asked.

"Acknowledge only God, and dispute the presence of evil. Put such nonsense behind you; trample it under your feet. Drive such thoughts out of you, and let Truth (God) reign in and through you."

"This is not what is called will power?"

"All so-called human wills tend toward the one central will power; therefore, the best thing to do is to get into the vibrations of the spirit and be still, and let God govern you and your little kingdom, your body. I do not mean some two-legged God up in the heavens, but your own I Am, the spirit within yourself. The only God who can help you is your own spirit. The only kingdom of heaven, for you, is the kingdom within yourself. But there is to be no influence by mesmerism, hypnotism nor any other isms or magnetic currents coming to you from the outside. You must be governed by your own conscience (spirit), from within your own tabernacle (body), and the silent word spoken to your own spirit is all that is required. There is but one will, and He controls the sun and all the systems as well as all thoughts and actions."

"And there is but one great and good man—my

preserver and my guide! The sun may shine for all men, and the moon may shed its faint smiles for many and the stars may twinkle for millions, but among men there is to me but one grand and glorious representative of the race, and that is my guardian angel and benefactor who is to preach peace and happiness to the subjects of this little kingdom, and to banish from its portals the devil and all his hosts," sang gladsome Olivet, tripping in, followed by her mother, who added:

"So say we all!"

"I used to think that compliments from high places were the sweetest music in the world," said Paul, rising, "but for the past year or so I have regarded such things with awe, because they are generally uttered for the mere matter of saying them or for the express purpose of idle or vain flattery. Praise accorded me just now is received in the same spirit it is given, for I know, sweetheart, your heart and soul and mind are full of happiness and adulation. It is sweet to know one's friends, and to feel that kindly ministrations are appreciated. But my loved ones, Paul Thornton is deserving of no special praise. In a divine sense there are no specialties. All men are equal in Christ—all men are one with God. He has no favorites. Each individual represents the church of the living God. There are millions of these churches and they are builded on a rock, so firmly, spiritually, that no cyclones nor earthquakes nor any other material powers can shake them, and they will stand the storms for endless ages."

Paul was full of the Word and encouraged by his audience, he kept on until the night had far advanced.

Early the next day he caught the fast train for a whirl into the country. One peculiar thing that struck the American was the absence of conductors, but upon enquiry he learned that the entire railway system of Appalachia was owned and operated by the government and it was as free to everyone as the Appalachian air they breathed.

At each station Paul spent the two minutes in looking at the country, which was much the same everywhere, and at the third station he got out, and mechanically followed a winding avenue which was richly perfumed with the sweet scents from the roses blooming in every direction.

He had proceeded some little distance when the sound of music greeted his ears and he continued in that direction. Arriving at a slight elevation he saw in the distance an amphitheater filled with hundreds of people. He proceeded to within a few yards of the convocation and sat down on the grass to enjoy divine services in Appalachia.

Unfortunately the meeting closed soon after his arrival and he was in ignorance as to the manner in which they conducted services. The congregation was much larger than he at first imagined, as hundreds had left and hundreds tarried behind. In the midst of his musings, those on the outside stopped and rushed back in great excitement and Paul was lost in wonder.

“She is dying!”

These words were uttered by a man who was evidently running for a doctor. Paul sprang to his feet and hastened to the scene. He pushed his way through the

surging crowd towards the spot that all seemed bent on reaching, and soon caught sight of a beautiful little girl, whose face was as white as a ghost, and she was gasping for breath. A woman, probably her mother, was rubbing her forehead and hands, and was sobbing aloud.

“Is there no help? Must she die?” she sobbed.

The minister, with his long robe, was standing near. He looked as sad as the occasion required. Knowing she was in no danger, Paul went over to him.

“Are you a minister?” asked Paul.

“Presuming from your raiment I judge rightly,” he continued, “I would know why you stand idly by while she passes on?” pointing towards the rapidly sinking girl.

The people crowded nearer and Paul’s words were plainly heard by all present, and the stillness was deathly.

“There is nothing more to be done, sir, until the arrival of a physician, I pray he will reach here in time to save her,” replied he.

“Yes, God speed the doctor,” moaned the heart-broken mother.

“God is a surer physician, my dear madam,” said he, advancing, taking the girl’s hands and lifting her to her feet.

“Go your way in peace, and praise God for his wonderful works for the children of men,” spoke Paul, and placing the smiling girl in her mother’s arms, he hurried through the crowd and escaped the throng.

“Who is he?” was the cry on every lip, but he

stopped not, hoping to make his escape. But the multitude followed and finally caught up with him.

"My friends what would ye of me?" Paul asked.

Not a word in reply. Presently a man whose silvery locks showed his advancing age, pressed forward, and bowed down before Paul.

"Oh sir!" he began, "we know you not, but your kindly demonstrations just now prove to us that you have faith and power equal to the prophets of old. Tell us, I pray you, who and what you are."

"Arise, my friend never kneel to any living soul. Never humble yourself in the dust," helping him to rise. "I come among you for the purpose of doing good to them that will get on board *God's glorious old band wagon*. 'If any man hear my voice let him come in and I will sup with him, and he with me,' sayeth the spirit. I say unto you, If any man hears my voice and seeks to learn of the Truth (God) I will make him ruler over sickness—yes, and sin and death. My friends quit pinning your faith to the doctor and man-made pills, and look to God for a remedy which is certain and sure. Your minister says there is nothing to do in the shadow of death, but await the pleasure of a doctor and his pill bags, but I say unto you that all things are possible with God, that beside him there is no other, and that the gods of medicine and drugs are humbugs and their prescriptions a myth and a lie. My venerable friend here says I am equal in faith and power to the prophets of old and cries out 'who are you.' I say unto you that in that great day, God will not inquire your name or from what kingdom you come, nor will He question you

as to time or space. You are one with God. Like Ruth let us join in the glad refrain: 'Your people shall be my people, your God my God.'

When he had finished, the old gentleman gave him an old fashioned, camp-meeting, hand-shake, and he was followed by the crowd.

The American teacher started on toward the station and he was followed by the people, who would not let him get out of their sight, until he reached the city. The hospitality of several homes was tendered him, but he could only accept of one, politely thanking the others, and he spent the night, the guest of a family in the very heart of the city.

* * * * *

The stranger and his wonderful cure were the chief topic of conversation throughout the city and country. Exaggerated reports were circulated, and by morning the entire city rang with the great teacher who appeared at the church and brought the dead to life.

When Paul started down the street the following morning, he was recognized by some one and the news quickly spread, and the people thronged and surged after him. Queen Angelina being informed of his works of the day before, he was cited to appear before her, but he refused the summons and went his way. Catching a car at the next corner he disappeared from the multitude and went in a roundabout way to Queen Oli-
vet.

He had but entered when her father came in, bringing news of the wrath of the Queen because Paul ig-

nored her summons. "Trouble was imminent," he told Paul.

"Forewarned is fore-armed," spoke Paul, "but I do not fear trouble, it is she who is blind, she who hovers over the volcano. I will bring her out right, though. I know her already. She needs some good advice and I will see that she gets it."

During the night and in the silence Paul decided upon a definite plan of action, and when he appeared in public again he was not surprised upon being told that the Queen's guards were looking for him, and he purposely walked in the direction of the palace.

"I arrest you in the name of the Queen" said a guard, taking hold of his arm. Paul was crossing the avenue trying to avoid the crowd when this pleasant salutation met him. The incident was heralded broadcast and in a few minutes it seemed as if the whole city was in the avenue surrounding them.

"What law have I violated to cause my arrest?" asked Paul.

"That is for the Queen to determine," said the guard. "I but do her bidding."

"Who is the Queen?"

"Queen Angelina, the ruler of this kingdom," he replied.

"Queen Usurper" yelled Paul so that all the dense crowd could hear. "Queen Olivet is Queen and is the only sovereign I will obey. Return to your Queen with my answer."

"Queen Olivet is dead, sir, and I go not without you."

"Know ye not, my friend, that I can produce Olivet, the Queen, were I disposed. I say to you, once and for all, I refuse to recognize your queen, go your way," and Paul shook the guard's hands off his arms and walked away without hindrance, the people following.

CHAPTER XXII

PAUL IS CAST INTO PRISON

ON the morning of the third day following his arrest Paul leisurely wended his way down the crowded thoroughfare. He walked erect, his eyes were bright and his face was the picture of happiness.

He puzzled the older heads and was the idol of the young. To the church people he was an enigma. Some praising, others condemning, but to the world at large he was a jewel.

“Are you Mr. Paul Thornton?” pleasantly inquired one of the Queen’s couriers.

Paul was as if thunderstruck. He stood and looked at the courier in utter amazement. “By what manner of means has she discovered my name.” thought Paul. He was thrown out of balance for a moment.

“What can I do for you?” said Paul, simply.

“I have a communication from Queen Angelina for Mr. Paul Thornton,” said the little royal courier, displaying a packet, embossed with the royal seal.

“If the packet is intended for me, I will take pleasure in accepting it. Convey to Angelina my very best wishes.”

Thrusting the letter in an inside pocket Paul’s eyes swept the avenue which as usual was thronged with

people. The masses gave evidence of their pleasure over the recent event by three cheers for the Queen with American zeal and enthusiasm. Paul was unable to determine whether this unexpected outburst of applause was given for the Queen's evident change in attitude towards him, or as a slap in the face.

Without assuming to take the outspoken tribute in any but a pleasant manner, he resumed his walk and at the first opportunity took a car for a country retreat.

Breaking the seal he could not check a smile upon reading the contents:

"The Queen presents her respects to Mr. Paul Thornton, and urgently requests his presence at a private reception to be held at the Royal Palace, and given in his honor on this day at high noon."

"I will go," was his only comment.

* * * * *

While the band was discoursing sweet music, Paul was doing his utmost to amuse and entertain a strikingly beautiful woman. His reception was attended with all the pomp and magnificence of a titled sovereign and no one could have asked for a more genuine welcome.

"Tell me about yourself, Mr. Thornton," she spoke with ease and with the air of a woman of culture and refinement.

"I will gladly give you the information," replied he, "if you will inform me, well and truly, how you came into possession of my name."

"That is my secret," laughed she. "Some day,

no doubt, you will know, but surely you will not refuse me the information desired. You should bear in mind that you are the subject of much gossip and speculation, and as I am supposed to know all my subjects I do not ask anything unreasonable."

"Was your kind invitation to a reception given in my honor a diplomatic maneuver, an artful dodge, to inveigle me to your side and answer questions?" asked Paul, adding "I give you fair warning, neither deception nor trickery will ever succeed in tempering the wind, nor will it blot out the memory of unpleasant thoughts. I speak plainly but mean no disrespect."

"You speak in riddles, Mr. Thornton. I have ordered men to be chained in the dungeon for far less threatening language," said she, smiling, "but I am willing to overlook your defiant attitude in the hope of arriving at a more amicable understanding. Being a stranger and under a ban, the public is clamoring for your history and your purposes among the people. In bringing you here I do you honor, and in choosing this means, I did so out of respect for you."

"You happen to forget the insult tendered me a few days ago."

"I forget nothing!" she said shifting uneasily in her rocker. "You publicly refused to recognize the Queen, and went so far as to call me 'Queen Usurper!'" her face was flushed and her words came from trembling lips. "My predecessor was drowned and I am Queen of the kingdom by vested rights, and my word is law, Mr. Thornton."

“‘ Though empires fall He whose right it is shall reign,’ is an old saying, but a prophetic one nevertheless,” answered Paul.

“ Am I to understand, Mr. Thornton, that your appearance here is to preach the gospel, or do you use Christianity and your intelligence as instruments to carry out certain designs and purposes. I want your answer. Yea or nay.”

“ God is running Paul Thornton, madam, and so long as he continues as He has in the past I am not going to throw an obstacle in His Way——”

“ I am surprised!” she exclaimed, desperately, “ that God would make one of his creatures an instrument to ruin the life of a pure woman.”

“ What meanest thou? Speak, woman!” Paul said, not divining her meaning.

“ You know well enough what I mean, Mr. Thornton. Let your mind go back to your native home for a moment. I am not ignorant of your past. And now let me give you fair warning, to use your own words, if it is war between us, I will banish you from my kingdom and you will leave here bearing the stigma of disgrace, such as was given to one of your sweethearts a few weeks ago, whom you allowed to die a moral and social death.”

“ Then we understand each other,” calmly replied he, rising, “ and I will take my leave.”

“ No, be good enough to remain seated. I have a proposition.”

“ Then speak quickly, for I have work to do,” said Paul, still standing.

Leaving her easy chair and going up to Paul she looked him square in the eye.

“ Paul Thornton I know your plans. You seek to destroy me in order to build up another. You came to my kingdom as a wolf in sheep’s clothing, but fortunately I happen to know that your designs are not so much in divinity, as to create dissensions among my people, dethrone me, and build a nest for your love and yourself. I speak plainly, pardon me for using your phrases, and, still I mean no disrespect. There is yet time for you to save your friends endless worry and trouble, and yourself exposure and banishment. I have the evidence and I have the power. It is for you to decide.”

“ Go on,” said Paul, calmly, “ I am still your guest, and God is never alarmed, nor does He turn pale and tremble at the words of Kings or Queens.”

“ Oh! ” she cried in anguish, her eyes becoming moist with tears, “ have you no heart? Would you punish a woman? ”

“ Punish you? Why should I do that? ”

Advancing closer and laying her head on Paul’s shoulder she sobbed, and between her sobs she begged and pleaded for mercy, and made proposals that shocked him. When she had fairly exhausted her resources in cunning, in flattery, in proposals and in sophistry, Paul raised her head, unclasped her arms that entwined around his neck, and deliberately walked away. As Paul was parting the costly portieres in making his exit he turned round to bid his host adieu when he discov-

ered she had flown. He hastened on, not dreaming of the fate in store for him. Escape from the palace was not without difficulties as Paul soon learned, and while the band still played he was being chained and imprisoned.

CHAPTER XXIII

ANGELINA'S PROCLAMATION

WHILE Paul Thornton was in the meshes of the ruling Queen, buried in a dark and lonesome cell, without protest, Olivet, in a complete disguise, her face protected by a heavy veil, her father in sight appeared with the Saturday throng on the avenue, in compliance with the plans of Paul and her father. The grand old patriarch walked along with a nervous tread, his cane thumping the asphalt with unnatural impulse, revealing to the veiled figure the condition of her father's mind. Thornton's absence was telling on him, and every few minutes he would look at his watch, all the while growing weaker and more unstrung. His attention was attracted towards the palace, which gave evidence of something going on of an extraordinary character and he marveled at the vast number of people climbing the marble steps, seeking entrance to the mansion. Even the grounds were dotted here and there with groups of animated humanity, including scores of ladies.

The avenue fronting the palace was crowded, a regular Saturday occurrence; but to-day the tremendous outpouring was unprecedented, and a number of well-gowned ladies were noticed in the merry throng, so that it was with difficulty the aged and infirm made their

way. The venerable father again consulted his time-piece which indicated that Thornton was nearly an hour late, and he was suffering in consequence. A failure would result disastrously to the old man to-day, but Paul Thornton's plans rarely ended in smoke. Olivet watched her father's movements closely, and knew he was distressed, but she dared not approach him with words of comfort, tho' her confidence in Paul was not shaken by the delay.

The chimes were striking the hour of three when Queen Angelina was discovered on the plaza, and was walking towards the decorated platform. A large number of guests, including her gorgeously attired court, followed in her train, making a spectacle of magnificent splendor, and she was given an ovation.

Seldom does a Queen appear before the people in public and then only on extraordinary occasions, and her presence to-day was a surprise.

“A proclamation!” whispered the people.

The avenue became a solid mass, all eager to see the Queen and breathlessly awaiting her message. And when her highness arose and faced the sea of faces before her, stillness reigned supreme.

“My beloved people,” she began, “I am sorry to say that an impostor has found his way into our kingdom, a man, who claims to be God, but who is neither a God nor even a Christian. Your Queen has been publicly insulted by the gross impostor and hypocrite, and he has refused to recognize your sovereign, which is not only ungentlemanly, but un-Christian, and the impudence of this smooth-tongued, mountebank is alike insulting to

Queen and kingdom, and to you, my people as well. These charlatans never fail to have a following, and this false Christ has succeeded in turning many heads. I admonish you to be careful. He is an impostor and a snake in the grass, and would scatter seeds of discord and dissension among us. A short time ago we all mourned the death of Queen Olivet——”

Imaginary tears and sobs came into play and the speaker gave evidence of great grief.

“ —This man who claims to do such miraculous things has intimated he could produce the living Olivet. But, my beloved people, do not be deceived by such rank nonsense. He might produce some one bearing a resemblance to our dead Queen, as jugglers do, but I warn you to beware of deception. We are a prosperous, intelligent and withal a happy people, who believe in God, the Father Almighty, and we should trample under our feet dangerous doctrines that spring up through base impostors. I thank you.”

“ My friends! ” began the well known voice of the so-called usurper, as he climbed onto an elevation right in the heart of the Queen’s audience. “ Be not deceived! God is not mocked. Neither Kings nor Queens, nor rulers nor the devil and all his angels and archangels, are able to crush out Truth. When your royal speaker, the so-called Queen, had bound and chained the man who now speaks to you, when as she thought I was imprisoned and securely locked to the dungeon floor, she concluded it was a good time to send you a proclamation of warning, and thought it required the delivery in person. When I said in public that I

could produce Olivet, the Queen of the Appalachias, I spoke truly, and I stand here ready and willing to perform that simple service. What say you, her people?"

"Go on" was the reply from a thousand throats in thundering tones.

"Queen Olivet, thou persecuted woman, whose throne has been usurped by another—the same who would have sent you to your death, I say unto you, Queen Olivet, come forth."

The awful silence that followed the command was indescribable. Queen Angelina stood in her place on the platform, pale and breathless, and trembling like a murderer.

"I come," said a sweet voice from the center of the crowd.

Queen Olivet had torn the veil from her head and the people gave way for her as she approached Paul, and when she reached him and stood by his side in plain sight of the great concourse of people, a mighty cheer went up from the vast multitude. Paul raised his hand and quiet was restored.

"Friends and neighbors this is a glorious moment for me when I am permitted to appear before you once more and to look into the smiling faces of my loving countrymen," she spoke softly, but was distinctly heard. "I am glad to be with you on this gladsome day, and though my crown is worn by another I assure you the loss is as nothing compared to my happiness in seeing you all again."

When she had ceased speaking another cheer that made the ground tremble was given with enthusiasm,

when her aged father made his appearance and embraced the happy Olivet.

“ My friends——”

All eyes were turned towards Queen Angelina.

“ My friends,” repeated she, “ you have witnessed a tragedy and I have nothing but compliments for the actors for the excellence manifested in the several parts. They are born tragedians. No doubt the scene seems realistic to many of you as it does to the venerable patriarchal father and you think our beloved Olivet stands before you in all her regal beauty. But spectacular scenes are deceptive, as I shall prove to you. Thank God I am prepared to show you how easy it is to be deceived. Let me introduce to you another living Olivet as truly the dead queen as the one now leaning on the arm of Olivet’s father.

“ Queen Olivet,” in mockery of Paul, “ I command you to come forth? ”

Queen Angelina waved aloft her wand three times and the young lady, known to the reader and to Paul, as Miss Arnold, Olivet’s double, clothed in regal costume, came to her side, when the hundreds of guests surrounding the Queen sent up a mighty cheer. The audience looked on in amazement. A murmur went through the crowd, as if carried by an electric current, men shook their heads and the masses stood with open-mouthed wonder. Even Paul was unhinged for the moment until the truth dawned upon him.

Queen Angelina and her courtly attendants, quitted the platform at once, and she was seen ascending the steps arm in arm with Miss Arnold, the guests remain-

ing on the plaza as if waiting further developments.

"A very clever farce," spoke Paul at last, "but Truth is mighty and will prevail. What says the father?" said he turning to Olivet and her loving father.

"Friends—" ("louder") yelled the people, "and neighbors, this is my beloved daughter, the late Queen. Crowns and thrones dwindle into insignificance when they and my little girl are placed in the balance," his hand on her uncovered head.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow," chanted Paul, and the vast audience shouted "Amen!" in chorus.

CHAPTER XXIV

TRAGIC SCENES AT THE PALACE

ON Monday morning, the second day following the dual scene in the vicinity of the palace, Paul and Queen Olivet were in the act of taking a train for a day's sight-seeing when a courier from the palace was seen running towards them and they halted. Paul was given a sealed packet, labeled important, and making apologies to his companion, he broke the seal.

"My guest, an acquaintance of yours, is seriously ill, and asks for you."

He read no more, and hastily explaining the urgent call to Olivet, they returned home, and he hurriedly took his leave for the palace.

The avenue was not so crowded as on Saturday, but the people were in evidence and were lost in amazement to see Paul boldly enter the grounds and enter the palace.

He had no difficulty in gaining admission—he was known to every servant in the Queen's employ—and he was ushered into a pretty little room, where he found Miss Arnold apparently in great pain. He sat down on the edge of the bed upon which she lay and took hold of her right hand. It was hot, and she was burning up with fever.

The Queen stood by and looked on without a word, and presently went out. Before she returned Miss Arnold had opened her eyes and smiled faintly, almost immediately falling into a deep sleep. Her fever was leaving in haste, and Paul walked over to the window overlooking the East grounds where the Queen found him upon her return. Finding her guest painless in sleep, she signalled Paul to follow and they passed into the adjoining room.

She was not so gorgeously gowned as when they first met, but there was a richness about her costumes that invited admiration. She was a connoisseur in the art of dress. And her gowns were gems of loveliness, and, with the jewels of rare beauty, that adorned her person, together with her natural comeliness, she presented a lovely picture.

"Be seated, Mr. Thornton. Tell me what to do for the unfortunate girl in yonder room. The doctor gave her enough medicine last night to kill or cure, but she grows worse right along, and I was almost beside myself. In my extremity she murmured your name, and I sent for you. I had grave doubts about your coming, but if she must die, I am glad you are here, since she is one of your people."

"Don't worry about her," spoke Paul, "she will awaken soon, having forgotten her illness—Hark! Yes 'tis she—I will give her a glass of water."

"No, remain here. I will attend to her wants," said she, tripping through the door, and closing it behind her.

"Paul, forgive me," said Miss Arnold as she threw herself at his feet.

Her sudden appearance so soon after the Queen's exit gave him a surprise and one he would have avoided.

"Miss Arnold," said Paul, slowly, "this performance on your part reminds me most forcibly of another one away back in Princeton—but under different circumstances. Forgive you? yes."

"When you know all you will never speak to me again," she cried.

"My dear girl, I know more than you think, but come to the sofa—there, now! Listen! You were jealous of Olivet and followed us to this land where you became a willing tool of Angelina. Here you were easily persuaded that I was enamored with Olivet and you were thus led on by hypothetical reasoning. In the first place it was unfortunate that we ever met since it turned out such an upheaval at home, but I will assume all of the responsibility resulting from that affair. Your first real false move was in your chase that ended with your arrival here; the next fatal move was the position you assumed in trying to thwart my purpose, which you know was both manly and just."

"Do not censure me, Mr. Thornton, I have shed tears of regret, many, many times since starting out on my foolish trip. When I reached the point that separates this country from ours, I began to see my folly, and my first impulse was to return, but something seemed to urge me on. Oh! Mr. Thornton! do not

think me weak or shallow. It was my love for you that led me into this blunder."

Miss Arnold let her head fall on Paul's shoulders, and, just at this moment Angelina swept in, unannounced.

"You are a physician worth having, Mr. Thornton," said she, taking in the scene before her. "Instead of a pale, sickly and suffering woman my guest has been transformed into a blushing, happy girl. I am sorry to interrupt you, but the royal carriage is at the door, and Mr. Thornton cannot well refuse to occupy a seat for a pleasant outing. You will excuse us Miss Arnold? Come, Mr. Thornton."

Paul was thinking of another Queen who was awaiting his return for an outing, but he could form no excuse now, and there seemed no escape. He glanced at Miss Arnold and saw a look of regret in her face.

"With pleasure, madam," said he, "I hope to meet you again, Miss Arnold, good morning."

That afternoon, after Paul and the Queen returned from a trip that encircled the entire kingdom, they were seated in her private dining room where a tempting luncheon was served. Directly, the footman entered and announced that Father Brown was in waiting below.

"Show him into the library and say that I will join him presently," was the madam's order, and turning to her guest:

"Mr. Thornton, I want you to meet Father Brown. He is one of our greatest men, very religious, learned, and a gentleman, will you accompany me?" rising.

Paul was about to make an excuse, but instantly changed his mind, and followed her. Once he entertained the thought that possibly he was walking into another trap, and a vision of chains and prison walls loomed up before him, but he gave her the reins, perfectly willing to risk the consequences.

Pausing at the foot of the grand stairway, as if in doubt about something, she hesitated a moment, and her face brightened, immediately linking her arm in that of her guest and they started down the spacious hall, and entered a small but charming little room.

“This is the leisure room, Mr. Thornton. Take that rocker—I want to tell you something before I usher you into the presence of Father Brown. You see, he is my counselor, and to him I submit all my sorrows and troubles, as well as the knotty problems of government for scrutiny and solution. Our dual seance the other day came pretty near doing the good man up, and he pinned me down for the whole truth of the matter, which he managed to wring from me, little by little.”

“Did you tell him all?” asked Paul, excitedly.

“Absolutely.”

“What did he say?”

“When he finally became possessed of the whole of the unfortunate circumstances, he wept like a child. For the first time I realized my awful mistake. I was ambitious and stopped at nothing to pave my way to the throne, with this flash of reflection came a flood of tears and I wished to die. In my misery I dropped to the floor in front of Father Brown, utterly crushed.”

"You surprise me," said Paul, "but Father Brown—
"He said not a word. He would not even touch me, but quitted my presence, the saddest looking mortal I ever saw. His wretched looks sobered me instantly and scrambling up I called to him. His arms shot up as if in a 'not another word' warning, and he walked away and out of sight and hearing."

"You have seen him since then?"

"No, and I dread to see him. You will go with me, Mr. Thornton, I cannot bear to face him alone."

"Nonsense," said Paul. "Close your eyes, Angelina, and, mind you, think of nothing concerning your troubles. Bring to mind the memory of some happy day in the past. Try to think of your happiness on that occasion. * * * Now, sweet peace hovers over you. Hold to those pleasant thoughts * * * and smile."

When they entered the library there were no visible signs of weakness.

"Father, I want you to know Mr. Thornton, Mr. Thornton, Father Brown."

Paul saw at once that his reverence was an icicle. He merely glanced at Paul, and a frown disfigured his otherwise pleasant face. Instead of rising to meet Paul, he turned his back to him, finally got up and walked over to the window. An embarrassing silence followed.

"Father, I am at a loss to account for your action. If it had not been for Mr. Thornton, I could not have met you here. I was a wreck. Father, when I came in here a moment ago, my heart was light, my conscience

was free. I was happy. That feeling still permeates my very soul. Oh, Father! You could not turn your back on one who stands so near to God, who——”

“ Say no more,” Paul cried out. “ I will leave his presence. It is best.”

“ Stay, Mr. Thornton, one word before you go. Father,” turning to the indifferent counselor, “ Father, I know not what you would say to me of my confession. Be that as it may, your unchristian, ungodly performance to-day in silently heaping insult upon my guest finds no favor with me. I may be a fiend. You may call me a murderer, and I may be guilty of innumerable sins, and yet, guilty though I may be, I blush for the great head of the Church, and my heart goes out to you in pity for your lack of love and manly qualities——”

Her words were cutting like a razor, and his reverence slowly faced the speaker, anger and scorn visibly affecting his serenity.

“ Yesterday this man was a stranger. To-day he is my friend. Yesterday I hated him with all the mad passion of a demon. To-day I revere him with all the love and adoration of a woman whose cup of happiness is full and overflowing. Yesterday I could have killed the man who sought to deprive me of the crown; but now, father, I feel that I am not fit to be his servant, and that I was wrong. I honor him. I command you, Father Brown, to make amends, and a failure to so do, now and in this presence, forever ends our friendship. You have my ultimatum.”

During the Queen's clever raps Paul kept his eye on the figure receiving them, who appeared independent and autocratic at first, but his expression underwent a number of changes before the eloquent tirade ended. While he no doubt deserved a reprimand, Paul was not so sure that such a severe castigation was demanded, and anxious to help him out of the difficulty, and before he could utter a word, he made an appeal.

"I beg of you, oh Queen, to forget what you term an offense. As a matter of fact, I would bend my knee to no man, therefore I ask for no apologies. I care nothing for outward actions from others, they know not what they do. Men who are born into the Spirit cannot be offensive to any one. He could not give offense. Godly men are so filled with love there is no occasion for snubbery. Truth and love are reflected from the great sun rays with such power that His bounteous grace and Christian spirit reaches out and dispenses brightness and happiness to every creature within the radius of its extremity. The extent of the rays depends largely upon the stock of love on hand. I believe that our every action is for our good, and I am inclined to look with favor upon what appears an unpleasant incident. Now, Queen, I will bid you a pleasant good-afternoon."

The Queen looked after the retreating form in silence and presently threw herself on to a chair and covered her face with her hands.

"My daughter, I absolve you," began Father Brown. "The difficult character you assumed would

have taxed the endurance of the nerves of a giant. Your eloquent censure on the one hand, and your flattery, your meaningless honeyed words from a charming mouth on the other, would have put to shame the greatest comedian of the nineteenth century. The only incident to mar the success of the comedy-tragedy was the pantomime feature. I assure you it is a most difficult role, and a trying experiment. I prefer the free use of my tongue. The lad fell into the play nicely. He is an easy mark."

The Queen was too exhausted to reply to the flattering criticism of the recent episode. Realizing the false position he was wont to place her, she suffered him to continue in order to gain time to play a trump card. She was a woman of intelligence and good, sound sense, and while she was never more in earnest than when she was reading his titles clear, yet in making an enemy of Father Brown she had not counted the cost. These and similar thoughts crowded her brain, and in her silence she was avoiding or at least prolonging an awkward situation and passing a most critical struggle. In her dilemma she gave herself up to tears. It was not exactly a case of "between the devil and the big sea," but she was in a peck of trouble, again.

"Father, the throne is not worth all this trouble," she finally thought aloud. "I have about made up my mind to abdicate in favor of Olivet."

"I am afraid you entered into the spirit of the farce too seriously, my daughter. Get rid of such nonsensical idea. No matter what happens, Olivet must

not reign. She is not of us, and we must never submit."

" You said a few moments ago that Paul Thornton was an easy mark. Let me tell you that you are deceived if you honestly hold to that opinion. He is the strongest man in this kingdom to-day, and mark my words, you can feed him tons and oceans of ' honeyed ' words, but nothing but right and justice will move him. His gentle bearing which you say is the result of flattery, is merely his Christlike manner, which has too much reality in it to be false. In his abundance of charity and love he would readily consent to make the change with as little publicity as possible, and if you look upon him as a man whom you can turn aside, by fair or foul means, be undeceived at once."

" You have grown melancholy," spoke he. " His presence here was a mistake. He is a mesmerist, of that I am certain, and if you permit him to visit the palace you will become a slave to his accursed influence, and we are lost."

" The game is already played, Father. Thornton holds the winning card, and why refuse to surrender the prize? He has treated me in all fairness. You seem to forget that he knows my secrets and yet withholds them from the public."

" We must get rid of the fellow," said he. " Who is he that he comes here from the other country and demands a throne for some woman that he brings along? No, we will appeal to the people! Let him do his worst."

Further conversation was abandoned, by the chorus of a thousand tongues in unison as they cheered to the echo, that drowned their voices. Stealing to the window they looked down upon the demonstration, the like of which was never before witnessed in Appalachia, and Paul Thornton was the central figure.

CHAPTER XXV

THE QUEEN OF APPALACHIA

“YES, Ollie, your Mr. Thornton is a wonderful man. Think of the time he is spending in your interest, and he has been at a great expense, too, which must be returned to him, an hundred fold.”

“I never saw such a man, mother. Wonderful? He is fully a century in advance of the common mortal.”

“Likely enough. His wealth of intelligence and wisdom certainly has no equal in this kingdom, but possibly the old country is more enlightened; we may be a century in the rear.”

“No, I can assure you that in point of education, arts and sciences, intellect, culture and refinement we are equal, if not superior, to his country. In mechanical progress and inventions we lead, Mr. Thornton admitted as much.”

“I thought you told me they had many advantages over us.”

“Natural advantages, mother. They have a glorious, warmth-giving, Sun, which of course we are not privileged to enjoy.”

“Oh, I understand, Ollie, they have the Sun, Moon and Stars, the heavens, its atmospheric changes, rain-

bow, and many other astronomical attractions which we cannot enjoy, but we have our sunlight, which you say is the same as the great orb of day, excepting the absence of heat, and that we do not need. In place of a sky with its galaxy of stars, its moon, its milky way, its rainbow and its meteors, we have a veritable sky with a constellation of glittering stars that sparkle and shine throughout the night with equal brilliancy. The moon we have no use for any way. On the other hand, my dear, think of the lightning, the thunder storms, the wind, the cyclones, the floods, the cloudy days, the unpleasant weather, the rain, the hail, the fog, the mud, the cold winters and hot summers."

"Yes, yes, mother, I appreciate the fact that Appalachia is heaven compared with the outside world in so far as the things you mention, but mother, dear, you forget the beauty and music of the spheres. There is grandeur even in their raging storms, the play of the lightning is magnificent, the reverberations of the distant thunder, in its deep, full bass tones, are unequalled, and the music of the raindrops is incomparable."

"No doubt, you enjoyed it, deary, it was something novel."

"And their great systems of railways, their monster engines and endless trains of magnificent drawing room cars, it was lovely, mother, to say nothing of the street cars, but in architecture, there is little or no difference. Their buildings are larger, perhaps, but they lacked artistic finish. Their shops, though, are interesting."

The enthusiastic speaker gave her mother a word picture of one of the department stores she visited, and

thus they talked all morning, finally making the circuit and back to the starting point—Thornton, the man who was the instrument in restoring Olivet to her home and who aided in making that home so cheerful and happy this morning.

Paul had made Olivet acquainted with all the facts concerning himself and Miss Arnold, their intimacy, the “scandal,” and that he believed her love for him was the incentive that brought her to this country, and Olivet had in turn communicated these facts to her mother, so that Miss Arnold came in for a share of the oral feast.

“Poor girl, I pity her,” said the mother. “Is her love returned—what does he say?”

“He is hard to understand,” was the reply, “but during their intimacy at Princeton I am convinced he was not only smitten, but very much attached to her.”

“Then he still loves her. He is not a man who—”

“The door chimes,” exclaimed Olivet, “Mr. Thornton, no doubt,” going to the receiver and glancing at the card.

“Miss Arnold,” she read, “why, mother, it is the patient instead of the healer.”

“A pleasant surprise,” replied she, while the daughter with a pleased smile ran to the door.

This little incident clearly reveals to the reader the character of this household. Instead of resenting the action of Miss Arnold of Saturday’s proceedings they open their doors and arms to her, and make her feel that she is among friends.

“Miss Arnold, this is an unexpected pleasure,” said

Olivet, recognizing her own living picture the moment she threw open the door. The visitor who approached her "rival" with fear and trembling was astonished to find herself in the arms of her double and carried into the house with the enthusiasm and warmth of feeling of a life-long, intimate friend.

Paul was advancing toward the avenue facing the west entrance to the palace where the Appalachians, a thousand or more awaited his arrival, having signified the welcome ready to be extended to him by a remarkable demonstration in cheers and huzzas that rent the air in patriotic, yet jubilant melody, the one which the Queen and Father Brown had witnessed.

Miss Arnold, on her way to Olivet, glancing back at the scene and hearing the shouting multitude, imagined she could almost hear the strains of Sousa's band as it struck up, "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

Paul would have avoided this dramatic All Hail! if his personal wishes had controlled events, but he had learned to obey the voice of his conscience, which he called the "I Am," who doeth all things well.

He realized that God was moving the people, and that Love and Truth were rapidly gaining a stronghold among the Appalachians. He accepted the magnificent reception as a matter of course, and without hesitation accepted the glad hands of responsive fellowship and welcome.

"Glory to God in the highest, Peace on earth, Good will to men," shouted he. "I am not a shouting methodist, nor a John the Baptist, but, my friends, I feel that this is a glorious day for Christ."

"Pardon me, Brother," said a clerical looking gentleman, going closer towards Paul, "I am a servant of the Most High and am anxious to know more of your methods of healing and treating disease."

"My methods are Christ's methods," answered Paul, "I treat disease as I do sin by placing my heel upon it as you would a venomous reptile, to crush it out of existence."

"Then you claim God as the power behind your works?"

"Who but God can cleanse our mortal bodies and quicken the spirit within us?" answered Paul, Yankee fashion.

"Who are you who has power beyond that of others?"

"He gives no more power to one than to another. We are all born with equal faculties, but all men are not born teachers. Many students are slow to learn music. The door must be opened—God does not force the door. Turn the knob and walk in, it is not locked. My friend, when you get into the splendor of the central sun, its glorious rays will stir the vibrations and penetrate the dead faculties until such misnomers as sickness will be crushed out of memory. Truth makes us anew. The old things are of the dead past. We are born of the Spirit and are full of love and truth and God—we want nothing more, there is no room for anything but God. Passions, appetites and greed have yielded to grander things. I claim no more power and spirit than you as a teacher should have, my friend, for to teach is to heal. If you are a servant of the 'Most

High,' and fully understand God, your knowledge and faith will establish health, for God is life, hence you are life, therefore perfect health."

"He maketh himself a God," said the "servant," turning to the audience.

"That accusation of the Rabbi's was the Justification of Christ," spake Paul, "for the Christian there is no other self but God. Mind is God. My friend, your body needs a spiritual bath. The vessel is full, but it has become stagnant with the ages of dead and decaying matter. Cleanse it, and fill it full of love, truth and power—God."

"How do we know but you are one of the false teachers that we are told would appear and to beware of?" asked another minister.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," spoke Paul. "The prayers of the unrighteous availeth naught. The spirit that was in Christ Jesus, should dwell in us, and if we are unable to demonstrate with the same power and spirit, we are lacking in spiritual understanding. If God be for us who can be against us? In him we live, move and tramp the earth, so if we suffer, God suffers."

"Then if we sin, God sins, and when we die, God dies," said the interrogator, laughing. "Trash! I suppose you believe that one can violate all of the ten commandments and be as spotless as one who lives a sinless life, doing all the good he can and trying in his humble way to live holy and serve his Master?"

"I see your mind is mixed with good and evil," said Paul. "How could sin enter into the world without en-

tering God? Doesn't God fill this universe? Is He not infinite? And is there any particle of space that He does not fill? You make your own heaven and your own hell! What you do is your own act, but you are God. Forgive yourself. When you *do* that the whole matter is ended."

"Do you believe in a future punishment?" was asked.

"There is only God; therefore there couldn't be enough space anywhere for a hell big enough to hold one man. All the hell any man receives is the fire kindled in himself, and this fire is for the express and implied purpose of cleansing."

"Then our church organizations are all wrong and we should pray to ourselves and to the God in us?" said a white-haired gentleman close by.

"When you get the idea that there has been a Creator, a heavenly father, out of your mind, you will begin to worship the Light. The only likeness or image of God is man. Don't go to worshiping a God with legs, and arms, and liver and lungs. Put this old heathen idea out of your head. It is idolatry! Praise your own body and mind and pray to your people instead of praying for them. It is the fashion among religionists to say; 'Oh, Lord, God! do this and do that!' and then fold their hands and await for God to do it. In these days of advanced thought the devil has gone out of business. God is neither great nor small, high nor low, neither old nor young. He is the All of All. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. You are the center and you may say in the majesty of your own

Divinity: 'Things may come and things may go,—men, women, Queens, trees, horses, cattle, and even the very mountains may move around me. I am unmoved, because I am resting in the center.' Be an individualist. Don't link yourself with any man or woman. Avoid organizations and societies, especially those blindly trying to do the work you do. Speak gently, find no fault, love your neighbor, and do nothing in transgressing the platform of the All-Good. Stand in your own individuality, right in the sun center, when you will always realize your own life, health, joy, happiness and prosperity."

"What is your religion?"

"I am an Individualist and belong to no school of religion. I have recognized my own Divinity. Organized religion is a shadow cast over the Light. The shadow of a priest or a preacher, or a book, falls over your own pathway, and you are blinded and made to turn aside, and wander into the wilderness, and quagmires, or else sit down and become stagnant. It is taking away from you your own birthright. Organized religion is a robber stealing from you your own right to approach God in your own way. God is an Individualist, churches are institutions."

"You believe in the Bible which speaks of building churches?"

"Yes, my friend, God is building churches every day. He has erected millions of tabernacles, and I am one of them. My tabernacle is one not built with hands, and the I Am in me can heal the sick all over the earth; can go from planet to planet. My heart is filled

and thrilled with the freedom which belongs to the Spirit. The God within me is my companion and guide. Instead of bowing to the elements or to the nerves or to the stomach, they should bow to us. All men are not prophets, all are not seers. All have not received the same gifts. And let me say here and now that all of us cannot be Queens."

"I am glad you quit soaring around in space long enough to get down on earth again," spoke the "servant." "We would like you to explain how a man who claims so much could get mixed up in a fight for the throne. Admitting, for argument's sake, you are right, and that you introduced the real Queen Olivet, do you not know that in deposing Queen Angelina you cause endless trouble and sorrow?"

"All imaginary ills are not confined to so-called physical disease. The mind is just as liable to get cross-ways as your liver. In treating, I do not enquire the trouble for God heals by cleansing the temple, this body of ours. There is only one Word, and you can't split it into pieces. One Word, one God, one everlasting voice. Queen Olivet was delivered unto me by the hand of God, and I was commanded to go forth and battle for her rights. I asked the Spirit no questions. I am merely obeying His will, and even the power of the organized church through its agents in yonder palace, will avail nothing. The priest may plead and plan, yea, he may command, but the great I Am will take him by the coat collar, and throw him out of the window. God stills the storms, my friend, and the big tornado that you imagine is causing trouble is rapidly melting

into nothingness—there is no storm. All is peace and serenity. Let the music of harmony and good go forth over Appalachia. God is always right and with Him there can be no discord. God is in the midst of this so-called crisis in your government and you may rest assured he will make no mistake. Queen Olivet will resume her rightful position and Angelina will willingly and cheerfully acquiesce in the arrangement. The leaven is working, and despite the devil and his imps, the will of God will triumph."

"There she is! Long live Queen Olivet! Three cheers for Angelina!"

The cheering and shouting were deafening, and the eloquence of Paul was forgotten in the excitement.

Paul glanced in the direction of the surging crowd, when an inspired scene was presented to him. Queen Olivet, in royal robes, with Angelina on the one side and Miss Arnold on the other, headed a procession on the beautiful grounds toward the plaza, followed by a royal train of uniformed soldiers, a band of fifty pieces bringing up in the rear.

Reaching the platform, surrounded by the excited populace, Angelina kissed the forehead of Olivet, and taking from her own neck a golden chain, she encircled it around Olivet, and arranged the pendant of the Queen, with its dazzling brilliancy, attached, in front. She faced the great crowd, bowing in courtesy and in a short but patriotic speech presented Queen Olivet.

The scene following this beautiful incident, beggars description. Old men cried for joy, women shouted

and praised God, thousands of people cheered for both Queens, and the royal band played "Coronation."

At the close of the presentation scene, Paul appeared upon the platform, and, advancing between Olivet and Angelina from the rear, joined their right hands and reverently placed his lips on the band of union as a seal, saying:

"Whom God has brought together in reconciliation and universal peace, let no man disunite."

"Amen," was the thundering responsive confirmation.

Father Brown, whose plans were so cruelly trampled upon by Angelina, left her with vengeance clearly shown in his face; but she was too "Thorntonized," as he expressed it, to take heed of his advice and actions, and her former lord and master made his exit without her knowledge. He realized as an unmistakable fact that Paul Thornton, with his gallantry, his pleasant smiles, his winning ways and captivating manner, together with his dashing, handsome appearance and his social, moral and religious power, had turned Angelina's head and captured her heart.

Before this stranger crossed his path, the word of the priest was a command, his counsel a law. He was to all intents and purposes the power behind the throne. His reign was short, but he had made good use of his official position as a *de facto* Queen. Angelina was young and in Father Brown she found a valuable aid, and it is no wonder, therefore, that he was deeply chagrined over the manner in which he was thrown aside.

When he realized that his Queen could not be thwarted in her determination to abdicate; that she no longer heeded his advice, he became very bitter towards the man whom he held responsible for the change. His leave-taking was as informal as the one when the Queen had confessed her guilt, but now his thoughts were not about what was to be done to avert a threatened crisis, but how to deal with the man who had clipped his wings and would take his place.

Going straight to his elegant suite of rooms on the second floor of the palace, he heaved a deep sigh, feeling that sooner or later he would have to seek new quarters. Throwing himself upon a lounge he burst into tears, the first real tears he had shed for years. It was a moment of agony and grief, such as never before fell to his lot. The reader need not be extravagant in sorrow and pity for the church he represented, neither his tears, his agony nor his grief were for his church; it was Brown, the individual member thereof, who was the sufferer, for purely personal reasons. Had Paul Thornton come between him and the woman he loved? When the grief stricken priest arose from his couch, his features were anything but those a priest should wear, but his eyes were dry, and his face determined. He threw on a light cloak and hurriedly left his apartments. Leaving the palace on the east side, he crossed the grounds and passed out, taking a car that was apparently awaiting him. Ten minutes later he was in close consultation with one of the employés of the government mint.

CHAPTER XXVI

EXPOSURE AND BANISHMENT

"No, sweetheart, my allotted work in Appalachia is at an end, and I must soon return to my own land."

Paul and Queen Olivet were alone and she was trying to persuade him to remain at the palace in the capacity of Queen's Counselor, and give up the idea of leaving Appalachia. This was not the only conversation they had held. For a week she had begged and pleaded with him, but with no success.

"Then I will insist that you accept the concessions granted you by this government."

"To do that, sweetheart, would necessarily delay my departure indefinitely, and I have given my promise to accompany a certain young woman through Hell's Gate the coming week. No, I will have to decline the magnificent gift."

"Seeing that you are determined to leave us, Mr. Thornton, I will convert the concessions into the coin of the realm, so that you can take along with you some evidence of the gratitude of our generous government."

"I beg your pardon, oh, Queen, for thus disturbing your highness," began the chief guard, making his entrance unannounced, "but the occasion demanded im-

mediate action, the matter being of such grave importance."

"Make your wants known, sir, and quickly," said the queen, angered for the moment.

"You see, oh, Queen, one of the keys to the door leading to the government treasury has been missing, and——"

"The Queen desires you to withdraw, sir. I will discuss the matter with Father Brown at another time. Understand, sir, this is my private room and is closed to government attachés."

"A thousand pardons, oh, Queen, but Father Brown instructed me to come here."

"Enough. Will you go?" said she, rising.

"He said I would find the missing key in his possession," pointing towards Paul, as he marched sullenly towards the door, with a backward movement.

"One moment, chief!" spoke Paul. "There is some mistake, Queen," turning to her, "and it is best to clear it up now, in his presence."

"What do you mean, sir, do you or Father Brown, insinuate that the keys to the treasury are on the person of my honored guest?"

"I was instructed to so inform you and to search him," said the chief.

"Outrageous. Send Father Brown to me instantly. But stay."

The Queen was in a towering passion while Paul remained seated, calm and unruffled. She rang for a servant, who responded at once, and who was sent to summon Father Brown.

That dignitary appeared almost immediately, his face pale and haggard, and he was shaking with nervous excitement.

"Father Brown am I to understand that you accuse Mr. Thornton of having in his possession certain keys?" asked the Queen, as calmly as possible.

"I—I—suspected him, your majesty," stammered he.

"What evidence have you for the suspicions or accusation, sir?" she asked.

"He was the only man at the treasury department the day it disappeared, your highness."

"Was he all alone?"

"Some lady accompanied him, Angelina, I think," answered he.

"That will do. You may go. And you, too, sir," turning to the chief.

"No, not yet," said Paul, "not until the chief has completed his search."

"Very well," she said sweetly, "as you will. Perhaps you are right."

The chief had no difficulty in approaching Paul, and began to go through his pockets. To the surprise of Paul, the delight of the Father and the consternation of the Queen, the missing keys were found in the first pocket emptied.

"There is the proof of my accusation," exclaimed the priest, "I always thought him a fraud and—"

"Begone, sir. Out of my sight, at once. Leave the palace immediately," stormed the Queen in rage, and the priest quietly took his leave."

"Give me the keys, chief, and you may retire. I

want you to sift this matter to the bottom. It is a conspiracy, and nothing shall be left undone to bring the guilty persons to judgment. Reveal this incident to no one!" and the chief bowed himself out.

"What new scheme is this?" she asked of Paul who stood near.

"Ask the priest, sweetheart. He could throw light on the subject if he would."

"You are right, Mr. Thornton," said Angelina, coming in from an adjoining room.

"Angelina," they both exclaimed in unison.

"I heard it all," she began, "and you gave him just what he has earned, Queen, a summary dismissal."

"Then you, too, believe in my innocence," said he, smiling.

"That hypocrite proposed that same scheme to me last week. He argued that if the keys were found on the person of Mr. Thornton, his guilt was firmly established, he would be imprisoned, the people would think him a fraud, and I would not be disturbed. From that moment I lost faith in him, and now I hate him."

"We are taught to love our enemies, that is, religionists so teach, but they know not what they say. The suggestion, 'love your enemies and do good to them that hate or despise you,' means that we are to bear them no ill will or angered feeling, to love them for all the good things they do and to refuse to see the bad things. I can easily overlook the errors of the priest, he is groping in the darkness."

"I will arrange to see him," said Angelina, "and I am going to tell him in plain words that if this affair

gains publicity I will expose him. No, he is beaten at his own game, and you will never hear of it again. By the way, Mr. Thornton, Miss Arnold tells me you and she are leaving us soon?"

"Well, if I escape prison, I expect to shake the dust of Appalachia from my feet in a few days," he laughingly replied.

"Miss Arnold has given me a pressing invitation to accompany her home and spend a season with her."

"I would be delighted to know that you accepted her kind invitation," answered he.

"Your visit would be one of pleasure, Angelina, but are you fully acquainted with the fact that the journey is a hard one and beset with difficulties and dangers? Are you prepared to make such a trip?" said Queen Olivet.

"Why, sweetheart, Angelina is stronger than you."

"Yes, Mr. Thornton, but she would be leaving her country with friends on a visit, not seeking to return to it, as in my case."

"Miss Arnold made the trip all alone. I think I will take the matter under consideration," said Angelina, tripping out, gaily.

"I am going to spend the afternoon with mother, Mr. Thornton, will you go along?"

"Thank you, sweetheart, I have an engagement, but will call for you—say what hour?"

"Suit your pleasure."

"Five o'clock, then, good-by."

CHAPTER XXVII

MISS ARNOLD MAKES A CONFESSION

MISS ARNOLD was in the blue room all alone, Angelina having just gone out. Her mind was not at ease and her thoughts were anything but satisfactory.

"If I had only told him all when we first met," she soliloquized, "but it's no use to cry over past mistakes. I am in a quandary, what course to pursue I know not. I would confess, but to do that might prove costly. I dare not risk it. No, he would leave me. He frowns on deception. What am I to do? Tell him I must, sooner or later, else he will discover the truth and I am lost to him forever. Oh, God! why was I so foolish? Why do I have to endure so much suffering? Hark, he comes. I must hide these tears. He must not know: not now."

"Am I late, Miss Arnold?"

"Why do you insist upon calling me Miss Arnold, Paul?" she asked, greeting him warmly.

"I once had a—a friend whose name was May," spoke Paul, calmly. "I say a friend, but it is due to you that I should explain all. I intended to do so all along, and now the opportunity presents itself, and with your permission I will to thee 'a tale unfold,' and thus redeem my promise."

"Oh, I remember your promise," said Miss Arnold, trying to appear calm.

"When I was young and foolish—I suppose I was foolish"—began Paul, "I began a correspondence with a 'young and foolish' girl over in New Jersey. We exchanged silly letters for eight or nine years, without ever having seen each other. One day she wrote a short note advising me of her coming marriage. I guess I cried over it—it came so unexpectedly—but I managed to get over the cruel treatment of my unknown correspondent, and had almost forgotten her, when I received another letter from her. She was still unmarried, giving a full explanation of the death of her groom-to-be, and she inveigled me into another season of correspondence."

"You—you certainly were easily led on."

"I confess to a strange but partial attachment. So strong, in fact, that I went so far as to write her of an intended visit."

"She was—delighted, of course?"

"No, I rather think she avoided my visit. She sent her apologies. She was suddenly going away."

"And then?"

"I had business in New York and while there I wrote her. You see she was spending the week over in Brooklyn."

"Yes, yes," spoke she, "she answered your letter?"

"Yes, and we arranged for a meeting. She disappointed me." A sigh escaped him, unawares, but was not lost on his audience.

"Not intentionally?"

"As to that I always remained in ignorance."

"She—she explained—apologized, didn't she, Paul?"

"She wrote me—yes. In fact proposed another meeting, and I accepted, fully believing her story."

"And was again disappointed?"

"Truly spoken. I shall never forget that unhappy occasion."

"I infer——"

"It was a bitter disappointment. I will not seek to hide it from you, and I shall never forget the circumstance."

"She was ill, perhaps, Paul?"

"So stated, but I will always think she was ill for a purpose."

"No, no, no, Paul. Do not condemn her, unheard."

"My dear, I am not condemning, but merely saying she feigned illness to avoid me."

"She would not do that—I—I know she wouldn't."

"Your pure mind, dear, cannot conceive of any one practicing deception, but you do not, happily, know the ways of the social world. Deceit is a great part of the social life."

"I can never tell him now," thought she.

"If she had been honest with me, had frankly told me she did not care to meet me——"

"But, Paul, what evidence have you that she avoided you?"

"Evidence? She sent a shameless woman to me with apologies,—a woman whom I took for May Temple, who led me to believe was the woman I had

learned to love. In my happiness I allowed her to take me to a wine room and I was shocked to find her not only intemperate and rakish, but an old frequenter of the disreputable place. My patience was soon exhausted and when she introduced me to a drunken friend of hers—no, let me tell you all,—I could stand it no longer and I excused myself and left them. Why, dear, don't cry. I went into the adjoining box, and while there overheard a story that made my blood boil. I realized the truth,—she was not May."

" May—May—was not to blame for—for this woman's false moves, Paul—she never knew that she played such a game—"

" Why, my dear," said Paul, interrupting her, as she talked between her choking sobs, " you seem greatly affected over the affair. I am sorry I spoke of it. Come, kiss me and forget about it."

" Have you forgiven her—May Temple—for her—her apparent cruel treatment?" accepting his caresses.

" I drove her from my mind, dear."

" Never to return?"

" I am almost ready to believe you are jealous—if so, dismiss the green-eyed monster immediately. There is no one who stands between me and the woman I love," sealing the affirmation with a kiss.

" But suppose, Paul, she had met you afterwards, and gave you a perfectly satisfactory explanation. Suppose, Paul, she was up to the ideal you had painted her in your infatuation that sent you after her—say she was attractive, loving and good."

" Like you, for example," interrupted he.

"Yes, if you will, that she was like me in every particular. Suppose you had met her——"

"You are cruel to paint such an unreasonable picture, my dear. What might have happened?"

"Yes—you know, Paul, that instead of being in Appalachia at this moment, talking to me, you would have been entertaining Mrs. Thornton, formerly May Temple."

"In that case I might have been happy, and yet I would not have been a teacher. I would not have met you. I would not have invaded this heavenly kingdom. Miss Arnold, I am perfectly content with my lot."

"Oh, Paul!" she cried, her head falling on his shoulder, "I can't keep silent any longer. Kill me if you will. I am May Temple!"

"You!" cried he, springing to his feet as if electrified.

"Don't—leave me, Paul. Let me explain myself.—I loved you. I meant to tell you—I swear I did. God helping me I meant no harm in assuming the character of Miss Arnold. But I was so happy and I feared to tell you the truth. I was jealous of Olivet, and I dared not say anything then. My love and devotion led me on."

She broke down at last and fell to the floor.

Paul stooped down and kissed her white lips, rang for a maid and took his leave, knowing she would revive soon. Meeting Queen Olivet in the hall he told the secret, and begged her to go to May with words of hope and comfort.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BACK TO EARTH ; PAUL AND HIS CREDITORS

“ DARN my buttons, Thornton, but you’re a reglar Jack in the box. Whar on earth has you-ens bin ? ”

“ Oh, up in the country, uncle, enjoying the scenery and splendor of new worlds.”

“ I never thunk you’d find him, sis,” turning to Angelina.

“ That was an easy undertaking, uncle,” replied May, with a wink at Angelina.

“ No trouble at all, I assure you,” spoke Angelina, taking the cue.

“ What’s you-ens got in all them ar sacks, Thornton, —some old rocks, I reckon, they always tote off a lot uv them ar—relics, they call ‘em.”

“ How’s the canoe, uncle—right side up ? ” avoiding his question. Paul did not care to tell Uncle Bill that those burdensome sacks contained enough gold and other precious stones to buy half the United States.

“ Ridin’ like er duck, Thornton, but you-ens ain’t bein arter goin home ? ”

“ Yes, Uncle, we are going home, sure enough, this time.”

“ Did you-ens fish out them ar jewels what were

lost?" asked he, eyeing May's jeweled fingers and her flashing diamonds."

"The lost were found," replied Paul, truthfully. "My sister desires me to make you a present, Uncle, and of course you cannot well decline a gift from her."

"No, you can't, uncle," said May, laying a package containing a small fortune in his hands.

He made due acknowledgment, being profuse in his thanks, and placed the unopened packet in the clock on the crude mantelpiece.

Paul and his two companions soon took leave of the good-hearted old mountaineer, and loading the old canoe with their wealth and baggage, were quickly drifting down stream.

Angelina had stood the trip with remarkable endurance and courage, and was delighted over the beautiful mountains that loomed up before her in all their loveliness. She had a pleasant word and a gratifying smile for the many, to her, new-fangled scenes that continually came into view and gave every indication of enjoyment.

May was too happy to allow even the trials of that underground passage, from Hell's Gate to freedom, to annoy her, and she endured the long, burdensome tramp without a murmur, emerging into the open sunlight with rosy cheeks, gladsome eyes, and a happy heart.

Paul was heavily encumbered by the millions of gold that was forced upon him by the generous Queen. He was not adverse to wealth, he enjoyed it, but he didn't want the earth, and yet he finally accepted a sum that would purchase a very large slice of it.

Nothwithstanding his ponderous load, he was lively and gay, Angelina had never before seen the humorous side of his nature and she was most agreeably surprised to find that such a sober character could be so full of sunshine and liveliness. His jovial, enlivening spirit played a very important part in lessening the suffering of his companions on that, dark, damp, wearisome tramp, with its innumerable pitfalls and dangerous precipices.

They reached a haven at last and they gave many sighs of relief and thankfulness that their troubles were over. Angelina appeared to forget that she would have to undergo a similar trial in order to return home, but Paul would not throw cold water on her happiness, by mentioning the fact.

The leave-taking at the palace was a sad one for the Queen, and was no less painful to Paul. He became Paul Thornton, the man, when he made his farewell visit to her majesty. She cried like a child and Paul was visibly affected. He did not try to check the torrent of tears that poured down his cheeks in sympathetic tenderness, as she said good-by to him, her arms around his neck, her head upon his breast, refusing to let him go. It was a touching scene, and one neither of them ever forgot.

He tore himself away from the palace with difficulty. He had given his solemn pledge to visit Appalachia again and with this promise in her keeping, the Queen allowed him to kiss her farewell. By the special request of the Queen they quitted her kingdom under cover of the darkness, being careful lest her people

should discover the secret entrance, and they arrived at the railway station four days thereafter, where May and Angelina bade Paul a tearful good-by, and they left for the Atlantic coast.

It was a happy reunion at the Thornton residence the evening Paul arrived in Princeton. He was given a sensational welcome, for his home-coming was one of the long-looked for events, and Mr. and Mrs. Thornton were sorely grieved over his unaccountable absence. He told them not to expect his return soon, but as the days lengthened into weeks, and there was no sign of him, their trouble and worry were multiplied, for be it said the business house of Thornton & Son had been closed by the sheriff and Paul found his father broken down as well as a bankrupt. He had saved his homestead from the wreck, and the little revenue from the post-office was their only means of subsistence.

"It is a sorry home-coming for you, my boy," said the joyful mother, "but we are glad to have you, anyway. You are young and by going to some new country, out west, for instance, you can soon make your way."

"Why leave Princeton, mother?" asked Paul.

"You know, my boy, that the son of a bankrupt has a rough row to hoe in his native town; besides, Paul, you must remember that you do not bear as good a name——"

"Spare me, mother! Do not recall those unpleasant memories. I will soon be able to clear up that mystery. Is Mrs. Overton home yet?"

"I think not; at least I have not heard of her return."

"She will be able to prove an alibi for her guest, as she met her in the East and brought her home with her."

"Well, we hope you will convince the people of your innocence, Paul, for that affair has proven a costly one for the Thorntons', socially as well as financially," the father spoke up.

"I hope you will not worry another moment, father, nor you either, mother, I am here to right wrongs and repair broken hearts and pocket books."

* * * * *

Going down to the post-office the next morning, Paul appeared in a new suit of clothes and walked along with a careless, happy movement, as though at peace with all the world and mankind in general. He smiled and chatted gaily with everyone he met, but not one enquired the cause of his long absence. Entering the well-known business house, a desolated scene greeted him. Empty shelves and barren walls, cobwebs and dust;—nothing but the post-office fixtures, remained to remind Paul of the once prosperous business. Even this token of ruin did not chase the cheerful expression from his face, and he passed on towards the inner office as though nothing had happened.

He was busy writing a letter to his friend Brownlee, a few moments after his entrance, when he was interrupted by the cashier of the bank.

"How do you do, Mr. Thornton? Glad to see you home again. How is the East?"

"Good morning, Mr. St. Clair," pleasantly greeting the seemingly affable banker. "Yes, I am glad to be home again."

"Had a pleasant trip, I presume?"

"Yes, I have enjoyed my vacation immensely; in fact, extended it longer than I intended."

"Such vacations are too expensive for me, these hard times."

"Yes," replied Paul, "they are costly. I must have spent \$500 the past two months and I can scarcely realize it."

"Five hundred!" he repeated, surprised.

"Ah, well, it all goes, St. Clair. I like money, but I like to spend it better."

"By the way, Thornton, here is a little matter that needs prompt attention," handing Paul his note for \$500 a week past due.

"Where is the collateral which I gave you as security?" he asked the banker.

"Why, you see," stammered he, "I did not know when you were coming home, and we took steps towards realizing on them."

"Am sorry you did that, St. Clair. How far have you gone with it?"

"Oh, we merely gave notice to the parties that we held them."

"The collateral is in the hands of your attorneys—I see," spoke Paul. "Just hold that a day or so, St. Clair," returning the note, "and I will look it up."

"We couldn't hold it longer, Mr. Thornton. It is long past due, and the bank is in need of funds. We

are calling in our loans right along now. The parties called yesterday and promised to attend to it to-day."

"Oh, they responded to your notices—very well. Perhaps you can make it out of them sooner than I can. If they pay their notes, why, I will not object; theirs are also long past due."

"Then you refuse to pay it, and we will have to look to them?"

"No, I said nothing about refusing to pay; I merely asked you to let the matter rest a day or two, and I would attend to it."

"Well, we cannot extend longer time. It is money we want, and we want it now. If you had stayed at home and attended to business, Thornton, instead of 'gallivanting' over the country and getting mixed up with a lot of questionable characters, you would have saved your credit and could have paid your debts. It was simply the Bank's money you were spending."

"Do you fully realize what you are saying?" replied Paul, perfectly calm and undisturbed.

"I do, sir, and I want to know what you are going to do about this note?"

"Can't I beg a couple of days' time?" Paul asked.

"If you will give us positive evidence that you will meet it, I might do so, otherwise we can grant no further extension."

"Isn't the security ample?"

"I will tell you frankly, Mr. Thornton, your affairs here are in bad shape, and you admit you are a spendthrift."

"Admitting all you say; are you not secured against loss?"

"Well, we have decided to close up your account with us. It is a matter of business, strictly business, Thornton."

"Then it is useless for us to longer discuss the matter. You say to me, 'pay up and quit.' I will pay you before the Bank closes this afternoon. Good morning, sir," and thus dismissing him, Paul turned to his half-finished letter.

"The Bank closes at three o'clock!" he said, making his exit.

Paul had scarcely completed his rather lengthy epistle to Brownlee, when an attorney came in and presented him a bundle of accounts. Paul merely glanced at them. He supposed they were correct, due and had never been paid, although, personally he knew nothing of them. He was looked upon as co-responsible with his father, and all accounts for any purpose were charged to Thornton & Son, hence the accounts were from the butcher, the baker, the shoemaker, the liveryman, and others.

Paul returned the bundle to the mild-mannered collector with the remark that he was busy with some correspondence, and asked him to call later—in a day or two, promising to pay them.

"Well, Mr. Thornton, I, I would gladly do so—but—but my instructions are to—to push the claims. Can't you pay them, and stop their everlasting gabble?"

"Tell me what they are saying, Horton, I am curious to know."

"Oh, well, the loafers are ripping you up the back, all around town. In fact you have been the principal talk of the town for weeks."

"What do they say?"

"A great many things. They say you are a bad man, a dead beat, spending borrowed money on women and your father and mother starving. Oh, you are catching it from every quarter."

"That is pleasant news, Horton, pleasant, indeed, after such a delightful vacation, but I guess I will live through it."

"No doubt of that," said he.

"I'll tell you, Horton,—I have a scheme. Let me have those bills again. I will jot down the amounts, what will be your charges for collecting—ten per cent?—about \$12. Very well, here is your fee! Now, then here is a retaining fee," handing him a gold piece, which he pocketed without hesitation. "Make it your business," continued Paul, "to see each of the these creditors and advise that suit be instituted, so you can attach. Do you understand?"

"I think so, but I do not see your scheme?"

"I will show you later. You proceed under my instructions and let me know the result."

Horton left him, very much puzzled, but followed his instructions to the letter, each one ordering him to proceed to sue.

An old man whom Paul had kept from starving through the winter hobbled into the post-office. Paul owed him a dollar, he told him, and he put up a great tale of woe.

Paul listened to him in silence, and when he finished, said: "I am sorry for you, Jenkins, a dollar would be quite a loss to you, but you seem to think there is danger of losing it. Why?"

"Well, massa Paul, dey all tell me you done gone busted."

"I see, Jenkins, but you weren't afraid were you?"

"No, sir, old Jenkins warn't scared. He knowed massa Paul'd pay him."

Paul dismissed him with a brand new silver dollar. And he resumed his correspondence. The attorney came in presently and Paul told him to notify each creditor to be at the bank at a certain hour.

"You might whisper a few words to the loafers about something going to happen at the bank at that hour."

"I begin to tumble," said the attorney, smiling, and making his exit.

* * * * *

It was exactly half past two o'clock when Paul drove up in front of the modest little banking house on Main street. There was a big mob of people in and around the building and it was with difficulty that Paul pushed his way inside.

"There he is," whispered the crowd as he elbowed his way towards the counter. Going up to the cashier's window, Paul spoke loud enough for all to hear:

"Are you having a run on your bank, St. Clair?"

"What can I do for you?" he said, coldly.

"I desire to pay a little note for \$500 which you hold against me."

A deadly silence pervaded the room following this remark.

"Do you wish to pay it now?" asked the cashier in surprise.

"I want to pay it now," repeated Paul.

"The collateral is over to McBeth's, the attorney."

"Oh, well," replied Paul, "I guess there are enough witnesses here. I will pay the note, and you can give me a memorandum, agreeing to return the collateral to me by four o'clock."

"Very well. I will write it out," said he.

The cashier was nervous and in his excitement he spent fully five minutes in writing the few lines required.

"By the way, St. Clair, I have a bank draft—I presume it is good?" pushing it through the wicket.

"One hundred thousand dollars," he exclaimed.

"Great God, man, where did you get this? Is it genuine?"

"Are you a banker and do not know the signature of your city correspondent?"

"Well," he said, hedging, taking offense, "signatures are easily counterfeited now-a-days."

"You have said enough, sir. Please return it to me."

"Why, Thornton, I will take it for collection."

"No give it me. Do you suppose I was foolish enough to think you could cash a draft for \$100,000? I don't suppose you could cash one for ten thousand. I will take the draft, please."

"But, I will have to have my money," he stammered, still looking at the draft.

"Did I not say I would pay that note to-day?"

"Yes, sir."

"I usually keep my promise," bringing out a roll of bills. "There is one little bill that will cancel my obligation to you.—Thank you."

Then turning to the mob who stood in mouth-open astonishment, and utterly dumb-founded, Paul said:

"If any of you gentlemen have any bills against me, go over to Squire Jones' and make oath to their correctness, and call at my office and get your money."

The mob quickly dispersed and the young hero of Princeton walked out and jumped into his carriage, leaving a gaping multitude of loafers and hangers-on in silence on the sidewalk.

CHAPTER XXIX

PAUL THORNTON, THE MILLIONAIRE

THE reputation of Paul Thornton had suffered greatly during the past few weeks, and his return was a signal for the tongues of scandal to renew their wagging. The incident at the Bank, however, was paralyzing. The news of his sudden return and the sensational *coup d'etat* were heralded broadcast and by the second morning the story had reached every ear in Princeton, and was rapidly flying up the valley and over the hills of the surrounding country.

It has been said that money is the root of all evil. In this instance the old saying was given a black eye since money served as a cure, for the town tattlers who had so generously contributed their time towards tearing down the reputation of one of their townsmen were now equally active in building it up, and the only explanation vouchsafed them was the appearance of the party in question, flush with money.

It was current talk in Princeton that Paul returned home a millionaire, a fact that neither Paul nor his parents could deny. "An uncle had died suddenly, leaving a vast fortune," so the story ran, and the young ladies whom Paul was reported to have been unduly intimate, were none other than his co-heirs to this immense for-

tune. A very plausible story, which could not have been improved upon.

When asked about it, Paul merely told his friends that the people had been very generous in attending to his private as well as business affairs and had been so successful he would allow them to continue, without his advice or assistance, and they received no satisfactory explanations from him. The report, however, soon became a settled fact, and Paul was fully re-instated, without an effort on his part.

To his parents Paul told everything. He gave them a detailed statement of all the circumstances leading up to the wonderful adventures, including his early correspondence with May, his New York experience, his turning a new leaf and his association with Brownlee, his spiritual awakening, and second birth, Miss Arnold's visit, the rescue of the Queen, and the incidents following, and the invasion of the Unknown Cave, with its people and its wealth of beauty and minerals.

It was dramatic, and his audience was greatly interested. So filled with surprise and interest, were his parents they sat in silence and applauded only by smiles and pleasing expressions as the speaker unfolded the wonderful story.

He was overwhelmed with questions, following his brief recital, and by the time they retired for the night his happy father and mother were in possession of facts that would have astonished the world and have created the greatest sensation of modern times.

The same evening that Paul was entertaining his

parents with his thrilling adventures, May Temple was pouring a similar story into the ears of a delighted audience in a New Jersey town.

May and Angelina made their debut into the former's home town with all the sensational features that attended Paul's arrival in Princeton. May's prolonged absence was as much of a mystery to her parents as it was to her neighbors, and they were beginning to be alarmed at her silence. She had written them of her intended trip into the mountains and had emphasized the fact that she would be out of reach of postal facilities for a time, and not to worry. But as time sped on and no tidings from her were received, it is no wonder they became apprehensive and restless.

It was with happy hearts and gladsome feelings, therefore, that they greeted May's arrival, having been advised of her coming by a telegram early in the morning, and she was given a royal reception. Angelina was not overlooked on this happy occasion, and was made to feel that she was equally welcome to Quenton, and to their hearts.

Before the end of the week the two young ladies had visited New York and Angelina was introduced to her friends as Queen Angelina of Appalachia, and was regarded as an important personage. "The sovereign of Appalachia, a practically unknown Island," as the newspapers put it. And her appearance in the metropolis was given an enthusiastic launch by the enchanted reporters who called upon her, all of which goes to show how easy it is for a foreigner with a title to take us by

storm. Busy Americans do not take time to investigate titles, they merely smile, look wise, bend the knee, join in the chorus, and pass on.

Angelina was every inch a queen, in appearance, and manner, and as a matter of fact had occupied a throne and was the ruler of a country that had but few equals. She was not a fake, and her visit to America was not as a fortune hunter, for she was a millionaire many times over, in her own right, hence May violated no social nor moral law in introducing her as a sovereign.

No one, not even May's most intimate friends, questioned the rank of her honored guest, whose costumes were dreams of beauty, and whose jewels, that flashed so brilliantly, represented untold riches, but all looked upon May with added pleasure that she had introduced the crowning social belle of the season into Gotham's society.

Angelina loved homage and flattery. She had been raised in luxury. Her whole life had been one round of pleasure, with the possible exception of the few memorable days so well known to the reader. She had been worshipped from her infancy. To be the recipient of adoration and praise, therefore, was to her an ordinary conventionality and an expected pleasure. Consequently she wore her honors with becoming taste and as a natural inheritance. No sigh of regret so far escaped the Appalachia Queen for her visit to America, and that her visit ended happily, will be shown later on.

When Paul left May and the ex-Queen, after a promise to make them an early visit, he took the train for

the city where he deposited his Appalachian gold and other valuables, opening an account with the La Fayette National Bank, the city depository of his home bank. Not dreaming of the chaos of the business affairs of Thornton & Son, he could not give his lady friends a definite date for his visit, thinking he would have to give a few weeks' time to home affairs, but now he was free from such cares, and was confronted with the fact that he was longing to get away.

He had written Brownlee, and that delighted personage asked him to run up for a day or two. The reply was brief but urgent, and knowing his old chum was entitled to a visit and an accounting, he arranged his affairs to that end, requesting his mother to be the first to acquaint Mrs. Overton of the facts, should she arrive before his return, and to write him at Quenton, immediately.

"Then you will not return soon?" she asked, a merry twinkle in her eye.

"Next week, perhaps."

"I presume you will give us warning of any real important happening?"

"Oh, we haven't gone so far as that," replied he, surmising her meaning, "but don't forget to see the widow. I want to arrange for a surprise."

"Oh!" she understood him. "I will see her the moment she returns. Paul, you look as happy as I feel. God bless you, my boy."

"Bye-bye, mother. Tell dad I will have the goods sent out from New York the first of the week."

"Won't he be delighted?"

"Yes," replied he, "father will never be really happy until the old store is running again as in the old days. Well, I want to make him happy, and if one of the biggest and handsomest lot of goods ever seen in this country will do it, he shall have it. Bye."

"There goes the best boy that ever lived," was her motherly comment as she watched him go down the walk.

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CHAPTER XXX

A RECEPTION FOR THE DETHRONED QUEEN

“THORNTON, our little nurse is a heroine, and I am glad she won out. Are you going up to New Jersey?”

“It is no use to ask you to go along,” answered Paul, “why not resign, Brownlee, and enjoy the sweets of a good, long rest. I am anxious to have you meet the ex-Queen of Appalachia.”

“You tempt me, old man, and I can get away without difficulty. Prof. Long would cheerfully take charge of my department, I am sure.”

“Hallelujah!” roared Paul.

* * * * *

It was nearly nine o'clock on a Wednesday evening when a delayed train on the Pennsylvania Central steamed into Quenton, a sprightly little town in New Jersey. Two passengers got off and were soon lost in the crowd, as fully a score of Quenton passengers were aboard and quickly filled the platform.

“Here are the checks, young man, and be quick about it, do you hear?”

“All right, boss, I'll take 'em right up. Golly, boss! but thar heavy,” said the porter, shaking the trunks.

“Two blocks up, did you say, Charley?”

“Yes, sar! right on de corner, sar! Ebry one knows the Arlington House, boss!”

Armed with this information Paul and Brownlee reached the hotel in safety, and after a hasty bath and a warm dinner they were shown to their rooms, where they began preparations for a late social call.

On the train they learned from the conversation of a jolly crowd of passengers who were checked for Quenton that a grand reception and ball were to be given at the Temple home that evening in honor of its guest, Queen Angelina, and they were greatly amused at times when these Quenton-bound passengers, discussed the Appalachian Queen. So ludicrous were many of the portraits that were pictured by this merry throng of the Queen that broad smiles were frequently visible on the faces of our two passengers.

Thinking he would give May a surprise Paul had not warned her of their coming, and when apologizing for the neglect, afterward, he laughingly reminded her of the result of such a warning, a few years ago.

Before reaching Quenton, therefore, having discovered the facts of the reception, they concocted a little scheme, and were now busily preparing to spring it.

It was a quarter to ten and the ball was at its height. Quenton society was out in full force. Scores of out-of-town and city guests, were enjoying the greatest social event in the history of Quenton. The elegant home and grounds were brilliantly lighted for the occasion, and an excellent band from the city was dis- coursing delightful music.

As Paul and Brownlee approached the festal scene they discovered the lawn dotted here and there with merry guests as they expected on such a beautiful Sep-

tember night, and they quickly entered the grounds and mingled with the crowd.

Presently they saw May, who dodged in and out from the several lively out-of-door groups, as if in search of some one.

Paul nudged Brownlee, who started after the fleeting little hostess, and awaiting a favorable opportunity, allowed her to run into him.

"I beg a thousand pardons!" said he, quickly, bowing low.

"Don't mention it—why? I—I guess I am mistaken, I—"

"'Pon my word!" spoke he in the midst of her embarrassment and actually blushing. "Surely I have seen that face somewhere? Ah! No, I must be at fault—your face seemed familiar, pardon me."

"You are Mr. Brownlee! You must be!" smilingly exclaimed May.

"And you are the nurse—the sister."

"Of course it is you! What a pleasant surprise!"

"Thank you. I was just passing and was attracted by the cheerfulness and gaiety of the surroundings, and when the strains from the orchestra reached me, I could not resist the temptation and unconsciously violated—"

"No apologies are necessary, I assure you, Mr. Brownlee. I did not dream you were here. Come in, I want you to meet mamma and some friends of mine. I have a surprise for you."

He suffered her to lead him on, and a few moments later he was presented to Queen Angelina.

"Mr. Brownlee is a friend and chum of Mr. Thorn-

ton," said she to Angelina, "and a personal acquaintance of Queen Olivet."

"Delighted to know you," said she, surprised.

"Thank you," replied he.

"Entertain Mr. Brownlee, Lena, until I find George. I'll be back in a moment," and she left them together.

Paul had seated himself in a half secreted position, apart from the guests, and had witnessed the scenes just described, but could not catch the conversation. He watched May's every movement, and was only awaiting an opportunity to play his part of the program, when she met a young man whom he had noticed smoking a cigar on the east side. "Why, George, I've been looking everywhere for you. Why don't you come in?"

"I am enjoying myself," he replied, hoarsely.

"Yes, but dear, you promised me a dance and—"

"Oh, I don't care to dance!"

"Why, George, you know you do. Tell me, dear, are you mad at me?"

"I gave you warning and advice—"

"Now, George, you surely ain't mad about that. I would have avoided it, but you know I could not slight them. Come in and dance once with me, please do. Think how long it has been since we danced?"

"No. I am not going in," said he, rather roughly.

"You are mean to me, George. You do not love me as you used to. I know you don't, while I have thought of you night and day, continually, and dreamed of your happiness on my return home. Come, sweet, kiss me, and say you forgive me, that's a good boy."

Paul could not endure it another moment, and had instantly changed his plans. He had learned to love May, and he realized the presence of another whom she adored and worshipped. With his own eyes and ears he had seen and heard enough to convince him she was false to him. It was a wretched moment, and his suffering was intense.

He was madly jealous, and in this chaotic condition he marched right up to the pair, with no settled policy. Reaching within a few feet of her he called her.

“ May.”

She recognized the voice and looking up, jumped to her feet and sprang into his arms.

“ Oh, Paul, how could you?” kissing him. “ George, George, this is Mr. Thornton; my brother, Paul. Oh, but this is splendid. Come up to the house,” pulling him along in her delight at seeing him. “ Mr. Brownlee is here—oh, I see!—you wanted to give us a surprise.”

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RESULT OF THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE

IT was late the following morning when Paul and Brownlee came down to breakfast, but their appearance told nothing of their recent plunge into dissipation. The average Appalachian would have stood in holy horror to know that the "great teacher" participated in the revelry and festivities of the ball room. No less astonished were May and Angelina when Paul jumped into the sport with such activity and abandonment, but these men of advanced ideas were not narrow-minded and never once hesitated to enter into the joy of the dance.

Paul wrote a couple of letters and he and Brownlee wandered over to the post office, desiring to purchase some stamps, and while awaiting the pleasure of the red-headed postmistress, who was evidently not in a hurry to wait upon him, Paul fell to reading the list of uncalled-for letters, which was posted on the side of the stamp window.

"Miss May Arnold!" said Paul, half aloud. "Strange she has not been to the post office. What am I thinking about?" remembering the assumed name, "I will call for them."

Procuring his stamps at last, he stopped at the delivery window and asked for letters addressed to Miss May Arnold.

He obtained two, not without some difficulty, however, but he assured the clerk that the young lady in question was stopping at the Temple's, and was well known to him, and armed with an excuse for an early call, the two started for the Temple residence.

The young ladies were expecting them, happily, and when May was given the "Arnold" letters her face paled for a moment.

Paul explained how he happened to ask for them, and May rapidly broke the seal.

"Mrs. Overton," she exclaimed. "I might have known," scanning the short letter. "Oh, Paul, she is seriously ill with fever!"

"What is the date of the letter, May?"

"August —, nearly a month."

"And the other one?" asked Paul.

"I will see!" she cried, trembling and calling to mind the morning when Mrs. Overton received the telegram.

"Last week!" she exclaimed, hastily scanning the few lines. "She is very bad and asks me to come."

Paul told them he would go down and send a telegram and find out her condition, and hastily took his leave, returning inside of an hour with the information received, "She was sinking rapidly."

Tears filled May's eyes, and she asked if she ought to go to her.

"Wait until to-morrow, May," said Paul, "and I am

confident she will be much better and then you can decide."

"I must write to her at once—"

"I telegraphed her in your name, dear," said Paul, "and she will answer by morning."

"And will write it herself," said Brownlee.

"Now you are all getting mysterious," spoke Angelina."

"Tell me the contents of the telegram," said May.

"Letters just received, have been out of town. I am with you to-day, so, also, is God. And neither will allow you to suffer. By morning you will be able to travel and I shall await a telegram announcing your coming to Quenton. With love, life and happiness, May Arnold, by Paul Thornton."

"Well done," said Brownlee. "Give the matter no further thought, Miss Temple. Stand still and know that God is at this very moment filling her mind with the love, life and happiness spoken of in the telegram."

Late that afternoon Paul called at the telegraph office and received an answer from Mrs. Overton.

"Mrs. Overton greatly improved," signed "Mother." Another arrived early the following morning:

"Fears gone. Am happy. Am coming. ————— Overton."

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The following Sunday morning the little church 'round the corner, in Quenton, was packed with an elegantly dressed audience. The term, "elegantly dressed" is used advisedly, as May declared the peo-

ple, especially the society portion of the congregation, were never so gaudily adorned. Every head was turned towards the door as the Temples entered, evidently expecting them, and as they marched up the center aisle, two-abreast, Mr. and Mrs. Temple, Brownlee and Angelina, George Temple and Mrs. Overton, Paul and May, arm in arm, and quietly entered the Temple pew, the silence was profound.

Quenton was greatly honored by the visit of royalty, and gave evidence of their appreciation in every way possible. Mr. Thornton, the millionaire, and Professor Brownlee, the great man of learning, shared in the golden opinions of generous Quenton.

The little church had been decorated for this Sunday service, and the minister had spent several hours in preparing an extra sermon for the occasion. May knew all this, and would not allow the minister nor the congregation to suffer disappointment. Paul and Brownlee were both ready with excuses, but the ladies vetoed all supplications and finally gained their point.

After an anthem by the choir, the minister arose and in a happy way reminded the members that to-day was the time set to again take up the subject of the debt against their elegant little church building. He expressed himself as not feeling sorry because he faced a magnificent audience, and everyone wore happy faces and, he hoped they also had full pocketbooks.

"We have reduced the indebtedness down to \$112," explained the little, fat minister, "and now, while the choir renders that good old hymn, 'O! for a Heart to Praise My God,' the baskets will be passed among you.

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver, quoted he, and the song began. When the last verse had been sung, the announcement was made that the collection amounted to exactly twelve dollars.

"Brethren, I am disappointed, but thank the Lord we have again reduced our debt, which is now an even hundred dollars," said the minister.

Paul rose quietly at the close of the minister's remarks, and the stillness was deathly.

"My Brother, I confess I am not a religionist, and will frankly add that I do not look with favor upon church organizations, and yet I will acknowledge that they have done a power of good. They generally sow some seed in good ground, the orthodox approach towards the great Sun Center. Be that as it may I am opposed to debt. I do not believe in borrowing or lending, and in view of the otherwise pleasant surroundings I desire to wipe out the indebtedness on this building, and will contribute the sum needed for that purpose."

When he sat down the church was filled with a buzzing sound, the echo of the whispering hundreds who were delighted at the contribution, but were visibly excited over the words uttered in making it.

The minister was no doubt similarly effected, but he allowed the strange doctrines to go unchallenged, and in the name of the church, tendered thanks for the unexpected but magnanimous gift. An hour later, while Quenton was discussing the millionaire, our friends were seated in the drawing room of the Temple residence, planning for a trip to New York.

CHAPTER XXXII

SENSATIONAL SURPRISE PARTY

It was the first week in October, and the twenty-fourth birthday of both Paul and May, they being born within a day or two of each other, and their friends were planning a surprise for them at the Temple house. They knew that Paul did not believe in observing time and especially as it relates to age, but as Angelina expressed it, he was a crank, anyway, and they proposed to celebrate the event.

Owing to this affair, Paul and May frequently found themselves alone, and were rarely disturbed.

“I can’t imagine what they are up to?”

“Who?”

“Why Mr. Brownlee and Angelina. They are always together.”

“Are you so blind, May; can’t you see they are a pair of doves, very much in love with each other?”

“True, but the past day or two they have acted so very exclusive, they seem to be discussing something extraordinary.”

“At this stage of the game, my dear, they can easily find something interesting to talk about.”

“Then you really believe Mr. Brownlee is in love with Lena?”

"In love?" repeated Paul, "I would not be at all surprised to learn of their engagement."

"You don't mean it, Paul!"

"Well, but I do. I know Brownlee, and if he has not already spoken, he is getting good and ready. As for Angelina—"

"Oh, if it's left to her, you can depend upon it, the knot will be tied. I happen to know her heart," said she, positively.

"Then, my dear, it is a wedding, and I am glad of it."

"I only hope it is true. I wonder if it will happen soon?"

"A double wedding would not be a bad idea," said Paul, blushing.

"Wouldn't it be perfectly splendid," replied she, with a pleased expression. "If I dared I would suggest it to Lena."

"Why not?"

"Will you speak to Mr. Brownlee?"

"Sure."

"I'll do it, Paul. Come, let's go to the house," rising. "But say, Paul, what if we are mistaken in their betrothal?"

"We must find out, but I am very sanguine on that point," replied he.

Arriving at an open window, they paused, hearing voices. Cautiously approaching closer, May was able to catch a portion of the conversation.

"It is the doves," she whispered.

"That isn't fair, May; come away. You may hear something not intended for your ears."

"Sh!" said May holding up a warning hand, "they are discussing it."

"The wedding? Good! I told you—"

"Say, Paul," joining him, "just think of it, they are actually going over the ceremony. It is going to happen, and that soon, too."

"Surely they would take us into their confidence?"

"I don't know, but from what I heard, I doubt it. Oh, I wish I knew if they were trying to give us a surprise. If so, Paul, suppose—suppose—"

"We make it a double surprise?" added he. "If we were sure, I would be tempted to go into the scheme."

"Oh, I know it. They were really rehearsing the ceremony, and he was admonishing her not to forget certain parts of it. There is no doubt in my mind, whatever."

"I will secure the license, if you say so. But we will have to engage someone to perform the ceremony. We can't have Brownlee, now—I should like to know whom they have engaged."

"I have an idea, you could get our little minister over at the parsonage."

"He will answer. It really doesn't matter," said he.

"Swear him to secrecy, Paul."

"I will fix him, all right, never fear. Shall I place an order with the florist?"

"Glad you thought of flowers—yes, have them sent up at seven o'clock."

"Very well, dear, go along and make your preparations, but mind you do not give our plans away."

"You can depend upon me," said she, accepting the parting embrace, and watching the retreating form of her husband-to-be on very short notice.

"Thank God my fondest hopes are soon to be realized, murmured the happy fiancee, "but I *would* have preferred a grand wedding. Luckily my trousseau is ready, and I will arrange to have a half dozen of my most intimate friends here on some pretext. I will consult with mamma," she decided, and away she ran, flying right into the arms of Angelina in the hallway.

"I was looking for you, May, come into the library a moment," throwing her arm around May's waist, a habit she invariably had when she was in a confidential mood, and May wondered what was coming.

"What is it, Lena?" enquired she, entering the deserted library, and noting her flushed face.

"It is nothing extraordinary," she began, "but I want you to do me a favor."

"Name it, Lena, and I will gladly do anything."

"You know Mr. Brownlee and I—"

"Yes, yes," said May, thinking she would soon know the secret at last.

"—— promised to go driving with George and Mrs. Overton this evening. We want you and Paul to go in our stead."

"Is that all?" said May, sighing. "I will ask Paul. I am sure I can arrange it."

"Please do, deary, for we don't care to go.—"

"Very well, Lena, I will help you out," she inter-

rupted. "Just the thing," was her inaudible exclamation. "We will help make her surprise a success."

Paul was made acquainted with the plans of Angelina and he readily fell into them. At six o'clock the quartet started for a drive. May had completed her bridal toilet, throwing a pretty riding habit over her wedding dress, and Paul was faultlessly attired in conventional black as was his custom.

It was half past eight. The Temple residence was in holiday attire and Quenton society had generously responded to an invitation to a birthday surprise party for Mr. Thornton and Miss Temple. The rooms were filled with the cream of the society of the town and they were anxiously awaiting the return of the driving party.

When the little minister appeared upon the scene at eight o'clock nothing was thought of it and he was turned over to the elder Temple. He was in the habit of making impromptu calls, and was always welcomed.

"They are coming," was the signal, and preparations for the surprise began in earnest. Mr. Brownlee, who had consented to act as groom, in a mock wedding, passed up to Angelina's room, where the bride was in waiting.

"Won't they be surprised?" said Angelina.

"If they do not catch on—yes," replied Brownlee, "but they are not easily gulled. If we could only have had a real minister, the surprise would have been complete."

"I almost regret it is a farce—"

"There is a minister within reach, Lena; if you desire I will arrange it," said he, smiling pleasantly.

"That *would* be a surprise, Tom."

Brownlee quickly darted out the door and down the stairway, returning shortly, flushed and out of breath.

"It is done, my dear, and too late to turn back."

"I am delighted—happy, Tom," covering his face with kisses.

In the meantime Paul and May, George and Mrs. Overton had reached the driveway, and were coming up the walk towards the house. The guests had been cautioned to keep in doors and the blinds were drawn. As Paul and May entered the hall they were at once taken in charge by George and Mrs. Overton, as pre-arranged, and having received the signal, they marched them towards the spacious drawing room.

"Let me remove my wraps, Mrs. Overton," said May. She and Paul played into their hands willingly.

"No, come right in, I want to show you the ring George gave me," said she.

"Yes, I must see it, too, Mrs. Overton," spoke Paul.

The doors were then opened and they faced a sea of happy, smiling faces. They were completely surprised and were thrown off their guard for the moment, but boldly entered and were laughing and chatting gaily with a half dozen who were detailed for the purpose.

They were just recovering from their first astonishment when the pianist struck up the strains of Mendelssohn's wedding march, simultaneously with the appearance of Brownlee and Angelina, who were preceded by two little girls in white, bearing aloft lighted candles.

Paul expected them, and hastily swept the room with

his eyes in search of a minister. The little fat preacher soon made his appearance and gave Paul a knowing signal.

The notes of the grand wedding march died out, and the bride and groom had taken their places under the arch. Paul whispered to May, and in the twinkling of an eye she discarded the driving habit and stepped forth brilliantly arrayed in her magnificent wedding gown. Paul led her to the arch.

The blushing and confused bride and groom, watching, involuntarily made room for them under the arch, and to the amazement of the guests, the minister unfolded a marriage license and proceeded with the ceremonies that finally bound together the lives of Paul and May as well as that of Brownlee and Angelina.

When the merry guests realized that it was a double wedding in unmistakable reality they were overwhelmed with surprise and astonishment.

The New York papers next day teemed with glowing accounts of the great social event, pronouncing it the sensational surprise of the season. The affair was the talk of the surrounding country for days, and all admitted it was without a parallel in originality, without precedence in society circles, and that no surprise party was ever so genuine or successful in social history.

THE END

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